# MUSIC AND ITS MASTERS.

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## A Conversation

BY

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*Translated for the Author*

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TO HIS HIGHNESS

DUKE GEORGE ALEXANDER

OF MEKLENBOURG-STRELITZ.

the present day ; they advocate *vocal* music as the highest expression of music.

That I am—firstly, because the human voice sets a limit to melody, which the instrument does not, and of which the emotion of the human soul, be it joy or sorrow, does not admit ; secondly, because words, even the most beautifully poetized, are not capable of expressing exuberance of feeling—hence the very correct "*inexpressible*"; thirdly, because a human being may indeed, in the most exalted joy, hum or carol a melody to himself, but could not and would not set words to it—even as in the deepest sorrow he may, perhaps, hum a melody to himself, most certainly, however, without words ; fourthly, because the tragic in no opera sounds, or can sound, as it is heard in the second movement of Beethoven's D minor Trio, or in the Adagios of his F major, E minor, F minor, and other string-quartettes, or in the Prelude in E flat minor of Bach's "Wohltemperirte Clavier," or in the E minor Prelude of Chopin ; likewise no Requiem, not even the Mozart (Confutatis and Lachrimosa excepted), makes an impression so deeply moving as the second movement of the Symphony "Eroica" of Beethoven (a whole mass for the dead!), or contains the same proportion of the expression of joy and the soul's emotions in general, as are heard in the instrumental works of the great masters. To me for instance the *Leonore* Overture No. 3, and

the Introduction to the second act of *Fidelio*, are the much higher expression of this drama than the opera itself.

There are, however, composers who have written vocal music exclusively ; do you consequently despise them ?

Such composers seem to me like people who have only the right to answer questions proposed to them, not, however, to ask questions or to declare and express themselves.

But why does every composer and, as is well known, did Beethoven, long to write an opera ?

Quick and general recognition has in it something very enticing—to see gods, kings, priests, heroes, peasants, men of all times, of all climes, and of every art, act and sing to one's melody, has something very enticing in it ; the highest, however, remains—*to express one's self about them*—and that can be done instrumentally only.

The public, however, prefers the opera to the symphony.

Because it understands the opera more readily. Aside from the interest which the subject of the play awakens, the words explain the music to it. The symphony requires the comprehension of music to be wholly enjoyable, and this gift the public has only in the smallest proportion. Instrumental music is the soul of music : but this soul must be fathomed, anticipated, sought, discovered.

The public does not trouble itself to do this in listening to a work! All the beauties to be found in the instrumental works of the great masters (classic) are known to the public from childhood through the enthusiasm of parents or the expressed opinions of its teachers, which *à priori* admiration it brings with it; should it, however, be obliged to discover their beauties of itself, it would be sparing of its applause, even to the classical works, now-a-days.

I see that you are entirely predisposed in favour of instrumental music?

Not exclusively, of course; but, at all events, in a high degree.

Mozart has written very much instrumental music of all kinds too?

And wondrously beautiful: but still Mont Blanc is not as high as Chimborazo.

How is it, then, that Chopin and Glinka are among your prophets?

To explain that would, I am afraid, weary you, or interest you too little.

I beg you to do so, with the condition only that you do not oblige me to agree with all you may say.

On the contrary, I wish very much to hear the objections to my opinions, only do not be too much frightened by my paradoxes!

I am all ear.

It has always been a matter of interesting speculation to me *whether*, and in *what degree*, music not only reflects the individuality and spiritual emotion of the composer, or is, too, the echo or refrain of the age, and of the historical events, the state of society, culture, etc., of that age; and I am convinced that it does so even to the smallest detail—that even the costumes and fashions of the time in which the composer writes are to be recognised, entirely aside from the quaint *rococo* which serves usually as characteristic of a certain epoch—only, however, since music has become a language of its own, and not the mere interpreter of set words: viz., since the development of instrumental music.

It is generally held that music does not admit of any positive characteristic at all; that one and the same melody may sound gay or sad, according to the character of the words to which it is sung?

To me instrumental music alone is the standard, and I hold that music is a language—to be sure, of a hieroglyphic, tone-image character; one must first have deciphered the hieroglyphics, then, however one may read all that the composer intended to say, and there remains only the more particular indication of the meaning: the latter is the task of the interpreter. For example, Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 81; in the first movement, designated "*Les adieux*," the character of the Allegro after the

introduction does not throughout give expression to the usual idea of sorrow at parting. What, then, is to be deciphered from these hieroglyphics? The care and preparation for departure, the numberless farewells, the sincere sympathy of those remaining behind, the varied reflections on the long journey, the good wishes; in a word, all the exchanges of endearment usual in leaving those we love. The second movement is called *L'absence;* if the executant be able to express the soulful tone of sorrow and longing in his interpretation, no further explanation is necessary. The third movement is called *Le retour*, and the interpreter has to present to his hearers a whole poem on the joys of return: the first theme of unspeakable tenderness (one almost sees the tearful glance of happiness in meeting); then the joy that it is well with him, the interest in the recounting of his experience, and the ever-recurring, "*What a joy to see you again! Do not leave us* (*me*) *again; we* (*I*) *shall not let you go again!*" and so on; before the close another glance of pleased satisfaction, then the embrace and climax of happiness. Is it possible not to call instrumental music a language? Of course, if the first movement be rendered merely in a lively tempo, the second merely in a slow tempo, and the third merely in a spirited tempo, the executant feeling no necessity for further expression, then we might call instrumental music non-expressive,

and regard vocal music alone as capable of real expression.

Another example—the Ballade in F major No. 2 of Chopin. Is it possible that the interpreter does not feel the necessity of representing to his hearer—a field flower caught by a gust of wind, a caressing of the flower by the wind; the resistance of the flower, the stormy struggle of the wind; the entreaty of the flower, which at last lies broken there; and, paraphrased, the field-flower a rustic maiden—the wind a knight; and so almost in every instrumental composition.

Then you are an advocate of "programme-music?"

Not altogether; I am for the programme which has *to be divined* and *devised*, not for the *given* programme of a composition. I am convinced that every composer writes, not merely notes in a given key, a given tempo, a given rhythm, but, on the contrary, encloses a mood of the soul, that is, a programme in his composition, in the rational hope that the interpreter and hearer may apprehend it. Sometimes he gives his composition a general name that is a guide for interpreter and hearer; and more than this is not necessary, for a detailed programme of emotion is not to be reproduced in words.

So I understand programme-music, not, however, in the sense of a reflected tone-painting

of certain things or events; the latter is admissible only in the sense of the naïve or comic.

But the "Pastorale Symphony" of Beethoven is certainly tone-painting?

The Pastorale is in music an established characteristic of the rustic, the merry, the simple, the hardy (expressed by the fifths in bass, as pedal-notes*); besides there are imitations of natural phenomena, as storm, thunder, lightning, etc. (exactly the above-mentioned *naïveté* in music), as well as the imitation of the cuckoo, the twitter of birds. Aside from this tone-painting, the Symphony of Beethoven mirrors only the mood of nature and of the country people; that is, programme-music in its most logical expression.

But is not the romantic-fantastic style—elves, witches, fairies, nixies, gnomes, demons, good and evil spirits, spectres, etc.—inconceivable without programme?

And quite correctly so, as it is based entirely on *naïveté* in the composer as well as in the hearer.

But every piece of music published now-a-days (with the exception of those in which the title designates the musical form, as Sonata, etc.) bears a name, that is, a programme-designation?

For that the publishers are mostly to blame. They compel the composer to give his composition

* This has no reference to the Russian pastorale, the character of which is quite different, and is mostly of a vocal art.

a name in order to spare the public the trouble of having to apprehend it—and many titles, such as Nocturno, Romanza, Impromptu, Caprice, Barcarole, etc., having become stereotyped, facilitate the understanding and rendering of the composition for the public, otherwise these works would run the risk of receiving names from the public itself. How droll that may be is sufficiently shown by one example, "The Moonlight Sonata." Moonlight demands in music the expression of dreaminess, reverie, peace, and soft radiance. Now, the first movement of the C sharp minor Sonata is tragic from the first to the last note (the minor key itself indicates as much), and so, beclouded heaven—gloomy mood of the soul; the last movement stormy, passionate, and so the exact opposite of peaceful radiance; the short second movement alone would in any case allow of a momentary moonlight—and this sonata is called universally "The Moonlight Sonata!"

You claim, then, that the composer alone can give his work a proper title?

I will not say that—for even with Beethoven's appellations, the Pastorale Symphony and Sonata, Op. 81, excepted, I cannot declare myself satisfied. If I did so I should be obliged to assume that he determined the name of the whole composition according to the character of *one* movement, or the *theme* of one movement, or an *episodic* phrase of

one movement—for example, "*Sonate Pathétique*"—probably so called from the character of the introduction and its episodical repetition during the first movement, for the theme of the first allegro bears a decidedly dramatic, animated character; and the second theme, with its *mordente*, is anything rather than pathetic; and now, even the last movement—what, indeed, of the pathetic does it contain? Only the second movement, at most, would admit of this title. The same is true, in my opinion, of the symphony, "Eroica"—the idea of the heroic is, in musical language, the valorous, splendid, defiant; or, in other words, the tragic. That the first movement is not intended to be tragic is indicated at once by the major key; the 3-4 measure, too, contradicts the idea of a tragic-heroic character; besides this, the *legato* of the first theme indicates a decidedly lyric character, the second theme is clearly of a longing character, the third theme a sorrowing, dreamy one. That animated passages appear in the movement proves nothing; animated moments may also be found in compositions of a melancholy character, but a movement in which all of the themes are of a decidedly anti-heroic character I cannot designate heroic. The third movement of the symphony is probably merry music of the chase; the fourth movement, a theme (might, indeed, be called of heroic character if it entered *forte* with the brass

instruments) with variations, of which two, at most, have a heroic colour. The title is given to the symphony, then, only on account of the second movement, which, indeed, is of an entirely tragic-heroic character! This is an evidence that at that time one could give a title to his work which corresponded to one only of its movements; to-day it is different (perhaps more correct). A title implies one and the same characteristic for the whole work from beginning to end.

You speak of instrumental music only; then music begins for you with Haydn?

Oh, much earlier! two centuries were needed to arrive at Haydn's maturity in form and tone-effect. I call the time until the second half of the sixteenth century the prehistoric era of music as an art, since we know nothing whatever of the music of the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, or, at least, only its scientific progress—the latter, too, only from the time of the Christian era until the above-mentioned age; even of the folk-song* and the dance-rhythm—these two most popular expressions of music—there is almost nothing known to us.† Hence I denote

* With the exception of the Ambrosian and Gregorian Chants, we cannot say with certainty whether folk-songs, by a setting to religious texts, became church-songs, or the opposite—that church-songs by the use of profane text have become folk-songs.

† Of the Troubadours, Minnesingers, yes, even of the later Meistersingers, we know only the literary history, little or nothing of the musical.

the above-mentioned date as the beginning of music as an art.*

Palestrina's church compositions are the first works of art. (I call a work of art one in which mere science ceases to be the prescribed standard, and spiritual emotion asserts itself.) In *this* sense Frescobaldi's organ compositions give to this instrument artistic character. Bull, Byrd, and others attempt the artistic for the virginal and clavecin (our modern pianoforte).

Can we refer these beginnings of the artistic in music in any manner to the historical events of that day, or to its state of culture?

In church music it is the immediate effect of the straits of the Catholic Church, whose Popes, incited by the attacks of Protestantism, felt themselves obliged to carry out a stricter discipline and higher standard in monkish and ecclesiastic affairs, and a more earnest aim and more ideal views in questions of religion. In profane music it is the natural effect of the splendour of the courts of that day, especially the English court of Elizabeth; her predilection for music and for the virginals, led the composers to write amusingly, and, according to the standard of that time, interestingly.—

Do you find in their compositions spiritual

* The Netherland epoch I reckon, too, as only a scientific epoch of the art of music.

emotion, to such a degree that you would call them artistic?

Certainly not: I would call them first attempts to express one's self instrumentally.

That is, naïve expressions of art?

Yes, of course—the first programme-music in the sense of naïve imitation, of entertainment for society. This style held sway a whole century, *i.e.*, up to the time of the *Suite* (a succession of dances then in vogue), and in France even longer, as there the two greatest musicians found the former style congenial, and in it did really very remarkable work—Couperin and Rameau.

And in Italy?

There, church music flourished especially, but was gradually overshadowed by a new style of art which began to develop—the opera. In instrumental music—with the exception of numerous organists — only two names can command our attention—Corelli for the violin, and D. Scarlatti for the pianoforte.* (The latter called his compositions Sonatas—*i.e.*, *sounding, played*—but they have nothing in common with the later sonata form.)

So in instrumental music—and this, if I rightly understand you, is what alone interests you—we were still in a state of infancy?

* I call everything that was written for virginal, clavecin, clavichord, and spinet for the pianoforte of to-day, as we can play it now only upon this instrument.

Quite true: though I would not wish to have Scarlatti, Couperin, and Rameau undervalued—the first on account of his freshness, his humour, and his virtuosity; in the second, I see a highly remarkable artistic nature and a combatant of this unremarkable epoch (especially so in his own country) for higher ideals in music; the third, a pioneer in the idea of the opera (founder of the French comic opera), and composing very ingeniously for the pianoforte.

But in England instrumental music, at least for the pianoforte, must have been developed, since its first beginnings are discovered there.

There, too, vocal music occupied the foreground, especially in madrigals and other choral works; but it is as though this nation, with Henry Purcell, had given expression to everything of which it was capable, for after him complete silence reigns; and with the exceptions of the oratorio and the opera (both styles kept going and represented by foreigners), it has remained so almost to the present day, when it begins to wake again. One thing is enigmatical to me—what Shakespeare could have heard of music there, in his time, that so inspired him for this art? Is he not, among poets, the one who expresses himself the most often, and the most beautifully, on music, even (in his sonnets) on piano-playing?

And in Germany?

There, church music, with Luther, acquired by the introduction of the chorale a new character; as in Italy, here, too, distinguished organists (Frohberger, Kuhnau, Buxtehude) appear. In general, however, music has, as an art, in comparison with Italy, still not reached an important standpoint; but all at once, in the same year, and in villages merely a few hours' distance apart, two names shine forth, with whose music is associated a splendour, a perfection equal to the "Let there be Light." These two names are J. S. Bach and G. F. Händel! Church music, organ, pianoforte virtuosity, opera, even the spirit of the orchestra—everything musical of this time—these two names represent in a perfection that is inconceivable, and which borders on the miraculous. With them music first attains the rank to which she is entitled, by birth, among the arts. She is, to be sure, the youngest sister, but through these two she receives the perfect stamp of maturity.

And do you consider them equally exalted?

To me Bach appears incomparably greater, because more earnest, more genial, more profound, more inventive, more incommensurable; but to complete the idea of the art of music at that time, the union of the two names is necessary, if only on account of the remarkable work accomplished by Händel in the opera, a branch of art in which Bach did nothing.

How does your idea that music is the expression of the historical events and the standard of the culture of a given time coincide with the standstill of the art of music in Germany during the whole of the seventeenth century, and the sudden appearance of these two stars? You can scarcely deny that exactly this time was wanting in greatness?

It is oftener the re-echo than the echo—and so too, here—it was the war between Catholicism and Protestantism; during the strife music was only the prayer in the ritual. The Protestant religion wins an equal footing with the Catholic—that is, comes victorious from the strife—and Bach and Händel arise to sing her Hymn of Victory.

But were they not fundamentally different in style?

Certainly—that arises from the difference in the style of life of each, and its demands. Bach moved in a small world, lived in divers then insignificant cities (lastly in Leipzig), in the circle of his large family, in his narrow calling of cantor at the Church of St. Thomas; his character was serious, deeply religious, patriarchal; his habit unpretending, simple; of a nature not given to sociability, and even until blind an indefatigable worker. Händel lived mostly in the great city of London, had the patronage of the Court and of the public, was opera-director—was compelled to

write Court and festival music; we know little of his family, very little of his social life; his habit was the long perruque, and in general the elegant dress of the higher English circle. Grandeur, splendour, some superficiality,* characterize his creations; he wrote operas, profane and sacred oratorios, few instrumental works (the most beautiful in his Pianoforte Suites)—thus, little that is *intime*, soulful, tender.

To you Bach is more sympathetic, because he has written more instrumental works?

Not merely on that account—for has he not written a mass of vocal works, unspeakably great and beautiful?—but on account of the qualities before-mentioned. I do not deny, however, that he, Bach, appears to me greatest at his organ and at the piano.

You are thinking, of course, of the "Wohltemperirte Clavier"?

You probably know the anecdote of Benvenuto Cellini, who had a great work to cast for the King of France, and found himself without material enough to finish it; he decided to melt all of his models in order to increase the material; in doing so, the model of a little goblet comes to hand—he

* Proof thereof, the possibility of transforming an opera number into an oratorio number, and, *vice versa*, an oratorio number into an opera number, which he, as is well known, not seldom did. Also the rapidity of his work—the *Messiah* written in three weeks, and, immediately after, *Samson*, in as short a time.

hesitates; *that* he will not destroy—it would grieve him *too* much! The "Wohltemperirte Clavier" is just such a jewel in music. If, unfortunately, all of Bach's cantatas, motettes, masses, yes, even the Passion-music, were to be lost, and this alone remained, we would not need despair—music were not entirely destroyed! Now add to this the "Chromatic Fantasie," the variations, *partiten*, inventions, the English suites, the concertos, the *ciacona*, the piano-and violin-sonatas, and then his organ compositions! Can one measure his greatness?

Why does the public then call him only the "great scholar," personify him in the fugue and deny that he has spiritual feeling?

From pure ignorance! It is quite right to personify him in the fugue, as this form has in him its very greatest representative; but there is more of soul in an instrumental cantilene of Bach than in any opera-aria or church music ever written. Liszt's saying, "*that there is music which comes of itself to us, and other music that requires us to come to it*," is, in the latter sense, as regards Bach, most appropriate. A few do it and are blest; the public does not, hence this so fundamentally false opinion of him.

But is not the fugue, after all, a dry scholastic form?

With all others, but not with Bach. He knew how to express all imaginable emotion in this

form. If we take the "Wohltemperirte Clavier" alone, the fugues are of a religious, heroic, melancholy, earnest, humorous, pastoral, dramatic character, alike in one thing only—their *beauty!* Add to these the Preludes, whose charm, variety, perfection, and splendour is all entrancing. That the same being who could write organ compositions of such astounding grandeur could compose gavottes, bourrées, gigues, of so charmingly merry character, sarabandes so melancholy, little piano-pieces of such witchery and simplicity, is scarcely to be believed. And yet I have mentioned only his instrumental works; but when we add to these his gigantic vocal compositions, we must come to the conclusion that a time will come when it will be said of him, as of Homer, "*This was not written by one, but by many.*"

And what remains of greatness for Händel?

Grandeur, splendour, mass-effect, and effect on the masses by simplicity of outline by diatonic construction (pregnant contrast to Bach's chromatic progressions), noble realism, and geniality in general.

Aphoristically I would distinguish the two: Bach a cathedral, Händel a royal castle; those in the cathedral speaking low and timidly, impressed by the power of the structure and the exalted magnitude of its fundamental idea *—in

* That is in general the impression of the hearer in listening to the performance of a work of Bach.

the royal castle the loud exclamations of wondering admiration, and the feeling of humility awakened by the splendour, brilliancy, and grandeur.

Then we must admit that, after these heroes of the art, nothing more of the grand and beautiful remains to be created?

In many directions not; for instance in church music, oratorio and organ-music* ; but new times demand new expression in music, and after these two there resounds new lyric, romantic, dramatic and fantastic, and, lastly, national music—these all represented by geniuses—and so the art of music still makes great advancement. A new era breaks upon us: the orchestra supplants the organ; the opera the oratorio and the church-cantata ; the sonata supplants the suite ; the piano, the clavecin, clavicembalo, clavichord, etc. But although the opera nearly alone ruled the public up to the middle of our century, we can recognise the advancement in the art of music only in the ever increasing development of instrumental music, and that in Germany alone—Italy and France having devoted themselves almost exclusively to vocal music; for this reason I, who recognise the ideal of my art in instrumental music alone, call music a German art.

* Altogether I recognize in them the point of climax of the first epoch of the art of music; that is, beginning—according to my estimation—with Palestrina.

We have now come to Haydn and Mozart?

Not yet—there is one still to be mentioned, who singularly enough has only lately begun to be acknowledged as he deserves, and whom I regard as the father of the second (instrumental) epoch of the art of music, and who has done most important work in *that* field in which the masters named by you were able to present us with so much of the beautiful—that is, Philipp Emanuel Bach. It is an error altogether, in music, to say *he* created the opera; *he* the symphony; *he* the string-quartet; *he* the sonata, etc. Everything has had its origin in many, and little by little; then one always appears who accomplishes the most beautiful in that particular form, and at once becomes the bearer of its name.

Philipp Emanuel Bach is in no wise the legitimate successor of his father in music?

In the sense of geniality, certainly not; he was, however, the representative of a new time of new ideas in the art. By his treatise on rendering and the manner of expression in piano-playing alone, he opened new fields to the composers for this instrument which was becoming more and more prominent; in his compositions also we find the germs of all later effort—Haydn's amiability and naïveté; Mozart's loving tenderness; even Beethoven's humour and dramatic power;

only indicated, to be sure, but none the less the germ apparent—forming in this manner the connecting link between J. S. Bach and Haydn, and in so doing attracting music from North Germany to Vienna.

This transmigration of music for half a century to return finally to North Germany is remarkable.

Instrumental music becomes more and more the pronounced expression, the echo or re-echo of the age, the historical events and the state of culture. It is scarcely possible to imagine a truer picture of the last quarter of the eighteenth century—say, till about 1825—than is heard in the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, especially in reference to Vienna. This, of course, is not to be understood as a literal or plastic expression, but as tone-allegorical, relative, affinitive. An amiable genial, merry, naïve tone, not touching in the slightest degree upon the weal and woe of mankind, the spirit of the world or its sorrows; bringing his Mæcenas (Prince Esterhazy) a new symphony, or a new string-quartet almost every Sunday; the good old gentleman, with his pockets full of bon-bons (in a musical sense) for the children (the public), and, for all that, always ready to give the badly behaved a sharp reprimand, the good-natured, faithful subject and functionary, the worthy pastor, the just and strict teacher, the kindly citizen in powdered

perruque and queue, in a long broad frock, in frill and lace, in buckled shoes—all that I hear in the music of Haydn—I hear him speak, not High-German, but in Vienna dialect; I see his public (ladies who, on account of the prevailing toilette, can scarcely move, and who smile and nod, applauding his graceful melodies and naïve musical merriment with their fans; gentlemen who, taking a pinch of snuff, snap the box-lid down with the words, "*Nay, after all, there is nothing to compare with our good, old Haydn!*" ("Ja, über unsern alten Haydn geht halt doch nix!") whenever I play or hear his compositions. We have to thank him for very much as regards instrumental music; he brought the symphonic orchestra almost to Beethoven's maturity, stamped the string-quartet as one of the most noble and most beautiful forms of music; gave grace and elegance to pianoforte composition and technique, and broadened and systematised instrumental forms. Yes, he is a remarkable personage in the Art, but, withal, for ever *only* the amiable, smiling (sometimes sarcastic), contented, unconcerned old gentleman —in his *Creation* as well as in his *Seasons;* in his symphonies as well as in his string-quartet; in his sonatas as well as in his pianoforte pieces—in short, in his whole musical creation.

And Mozart?

Just as Haydn, as the *old Haydn*, becomes a type, so Mozart, as the *young Mozart*, may be called a type—although as to time and surroundings standing on the same level of culture with Haydn, he is young, sincere, tender, in everything. The journeys of his childhood also had an influence on his musical thought and feeling. The opera became indeed his chief work, but his *Ego* he gives us in his instrumental works; and there I hear him too, as Haydn, speak the Vienna dialect. Helios of music, I would call him. He has illuminated all forms of music with his light—on one and all impressed this stamp of the godlike. We are at a loss which to admire most in him—his melody or his technique—his crystal clearness, or the richness of his invention: the symphony in G minor (this *unicum* in symphonic-lyric style); the last movement of the "Jupiter" symphony (this *unicum* in symphonic technique); the overtures to the *Magic Flute* and to *Figaro* (these *unica* of the merry, the fresh, the godlike); the Requiem (this *unicum* of euphony in sorrow); the Pianoforte Fantasias; the string-quartet in G minor (in the latter it is not uninteresting to see verified how greatly wealth of melody outweighs everything else in music—we demand generally in quartet style a polyphonic treatment of the voices; here, however, homophony reigns; the

very simplest accompaniment to every theme that enters; and we revel in the enjoyment of this heavenly melody); and at last, besides all these wonderful instrumental works, the wonderful operas! Gluck, it is true, had achieved great things in the opera before him—yes, opened new paths—but in comparison with Mozart he is of stone. Besides, Mozart has the merit of having removed the opera from the icy pathos of mythology into real life, into the purely human; and from the Italian into the German (national). The most remarkable feature of his operas is the musical characteristique he has given to every figure, so that each personage has become an immortal type. It is true that the happy choice of material and its excellent scenic treatment was of great assistance in this.

The text to the *Magic Flute* is generally considered childish and ludicrous?

I am *not at all* of that opinion—even were it only on account of the variety it offers to the musician. Pathetic, fantastic, lyric, comic, naïve, romantic, dramatic, tragic—yes, it would be hard to find an expression that is wanting in it. The same is the case in *Don Juan.* The genius of Mozart was of course required to reproduce it all as musically as he has done; but such opera texts might incite less genial composers to interesting work.

But that which *he* has made, he alone could make?

Yes; a godlike creation, all flooded with light! In hearing Mozart, I always wish to exclaim—"*Eternal sunshine in music, thy name is Mozart!*"

It is incomprehensible to me how you, while giving him such exalted admiration, still do not give him the highest recognition.

Mankind thirsts for a storm; it feels that it may become dry and parched in the eternal Haydn-Mozart sunshine; it wishes to express itself earnestly; it longs for action; it becomes dramatic; the French Revolution resounds. Beethoven appears!

But you do not mean to say that Beethoven is the musical reverberation of the French Revolution?

Not of the *guillotine*, of course—but at all events of that great world-drama—in no wise history set into music, but the tragedy echoing in music, which is there called "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

He, however, consistently carries on the style of Haydn and Mozart, at least in the works of his first period?

The forms in his first period are the forms then reigning, but the line of thought is, even in these works of his youth, a wholly different one. The last movement in his *first* pianoforte sonata

(F minor), more especially in the second theme, is already a new world of emotion, expression, pianoforte-effect, and even pianoforte technique. So, too, the adagio in the second sonata (A major), the adagio in the first string-quartet (F major), etc.; and the treatment of the instruments in his first three trios is another treatment entirely from that until then in vogue. In the works of his first period altogether, as I have said, we recognise only the formulæ of the earlier composers; for although the garb still remains the same for a time, we hear, even in these works, that natural hair will soon take the place of the powdered perruque and queue; that boots instead of buckled shoes will change the gait of the man (in music too), that the coat, instead of the broad frock with the steel buttons, will give him another bearing. And even in these works resounds, besides the loving tone of Haydn and Mozart, the soulful-tone (with the former not apparent), and very soon after, beside æstheticism (as with them), an ethic tone (in them wanting), and we become aware that he supplants the minuet with the scherzo, and so stamps his works with a more virile character; that through him instrumental music will be capable of conveying dramatic, even tragic feeling; that humour may rise to irony; that music in general has acquired a new art of expression. In his adagios he is incredibly great—from the most beautiful

lyric expression to the metaphysical. Yes, he attains the mystical in this art of expression; but he is most inconceivable in his scherzos (some of them I would compare with the jester in *King Lear*), smiling, laughing, merry-making; not seldom bitterness, irony, effervescence, a world of psychologic expression is heard in them, and that not as from a human being, but as from an invisible Titan, who now rejoices over humanity, now is offended, now makes fun of them, and again weeps; enough—wholly incommensurable!

Well, it will be difficult to come into contradiction with you in regard to Beethoven, because all equally admire him.

And yet, I entertain some difference of opinion in regard to him which I cannot refrain from expressing. Thus, for example—I consider *Fidelio* the most beautiful opera in existence to-day, because it is the true music-drama in every particular; because with all the reality of the musical characteristique there is always beautiful melody; because notwithstanding all interest in the orchestra, the latter always allows the persons upon the stage to speak, and does not speak for them; because every tone of it comes from the depth and truth of the soul, and must reach the soul of the hearer. And still it is the generally accepted opinion that Beethoven could not be an opera-composer. I do

not regard his *Missa Solemnis* as one of his greatest creations—and it is generally regarded as such.

May I ask why it does not find grace in your eyes?

Because, aside from the purely musical in it, with which in many ways I do not sympathise, I hear in the whole composition a being who speaks with God, disputes with Him, but does not pray to Him nor adore Him as he has done so beautifully in his "Geistlichen Lieder" (Spiritual Songs).

Neither do I share the opinion that the use of the vocal in the last movement of the Ninth Symphony was a desire on his part for culmination of the musical expression in a technical sense for the symphony in general, but, on the contrary, that after the "unutterable" of the first three movements he intended to have something utterable, hence the last movement with addition of voices (with words).

I do not believe that this last movement is intended as the Ode to Joy, but the Ode to Freedom. It is said that Schiller was moved, by the censure he received, to write *Freude* instead of *Freiheit* (Joy instead of Freedom), and that Beethoven knew this. I believe it most decidedly; joy is not acquired—it comes and it is there; but freedom must be won—hence the theme begins *pp* in the bassi, and

goes through many variations, to ring out finally in a triumphant *fortissimo.* And freedom too is a serious thing, hence too the earnest character of the theme. *Seid umschlungen, Millionen* ("Be embraced, ye millions!") is also not reconcilable with joy, since joy is of a more individual character, and cannot embrace all mankind —and so many other things.

So you also do not share the opinion that Beethoven would have written many things different, others not at all, if he had not become deaf?

Not in the slightest degree. That which we call his "third period" was the period of his deafness; and what would music be without this third period? The last pianoforte sonatas, the last string-quartets, the Ninth Symphony, and others, were possible only because of his deafness. This absolute concentration, this being transported into another world, this vibrating soul, this lament never heard before, this bound Prometheus, this tragicalness—in no opera even approximately present—all this could only find means to express itself because of his deafness. He had, indeed, written beautiful, indeed unrivalled, works before his deafness; for example, what is the Höllen-scene of Gluck's *Orpheus* in comparison with the second movement of his G major piano concerto? what any tragedy

(*Hamlet* and *King Lear* excepted) in comparison with the second movement of his D major trio? what a whole drama in comparison with the *Coriolanus* overture? But yet the most exalted, the most wondrous, the most inconceivable—not until after his deafness. As the *seer* may be imagined blind—that is, blind to all his surroundings, and seeing with the eyes of the soul—so the *hearer* may be imagined deaf: deaf to all his surroundings and hearing with the hearing of the soul. O, deafness of Beethoven, what unspeakable sorrow for himself, and what unspeakable joy for art and for humanity!

You did right to warn me of your paradoxes.

If only as much truth as is contained in every paradox is to be found in this opinion of mine, I am happy to have felt so.

So, then, Beethoven has expressed the Alpha and Omega in music?

Not quite. He has taken us with him in his flight to the stars, but from below a song is resounding: "O come hither; the earth, too, is so beautiful!" This song Schubert sings to us.

You are contradicting yourself there; he was *vocal* composer *par excellence.*

But not in the pretentious sense of the opera (in which he achieved but little), but in the sense of the song, the one and only legitimate vocal music besides church music. And in addition, he

has written so much and such wondrous instrumental music! I regard Beethoven as the point of culmination in the second epoch of the art of music, and Schubert as the father of the third epoch. Yes, this Schubert is a remarkable presence in music! While, in the case of all others (even the greatest) we find forerunners, he appears to have developed entirely out of his own resources (or even if he had forerunners, they are entirely unknown to us), and that, too, as well in vocal as in instrumental music. He creates a new lyric style, lyric-romanticism in music. Before him the song was either the naïve couplet or the elaborated ballad—stiff, dry, with recitative, with shallow cantilena, scholastic form, meaningless accompaniment, etc. He creates the emotional song, which comes from the heart and penetrates to the heart; gives the musical poem to the poetic one, the melody that declares the words. He creates a form of art in which very much that is beautiful has been done after him, but in which he still stands unrivalled. What can rival the "Winterreise," the "Schwanengesang," the "Müllerlieder," and so many others? Besides these he created the short piano-piece, and there he is to me most inexplicable! Living at the same time and in the same city as Beethoven, and yet so entirely uninfluenced in his musical creations, even in his symphonies, in chamber-music, and likewise in piano music. Compare

Beethoven's "Bagatelles" alone with Schubert's "Moments Musicals," or with his Impromptus. Yes, he stands alone in the art of song as in his little piano-pieces, in his "Rhapsodie Hongroise" for four hands, in his "Marches," his Waltzes; in short, in all that he has created. In one form only he does not attain the highest altitude—that is, the sonata. But, firstly, Beethoven had really said the last word in this form; and, secondly, to his pronouncedly lyric-romantic character, creation in this epic form was not natural.

He is generally accused of want of form.

His peculiarity of inserting whole songs (without words) into his larger works (*heavenly* themes with *earthly* interludes and developments) has rendered them lengthy; this is especially to be felt in his pianoforte sonatas, with exception of two or three.—Schumann has so rightly called them "*heavenly lengths.*"

Can he and Beethoven have been so estranged?

They were acquainted, but there was no mutual esteem; the latter is known only of Schubert. Beethoven was either entirely locked up within himself (towards musicians often rude and forbidding, besides being hard of access on account of his deafness), or moved in the highest circles of society (the Archduke Rudolf was his pupil, friend, and patron). Schubert was a genuine Viennese child of the people,—the Folks' Garden,

the street, the café, the gipsies, his world; the Vienna dialect (as with Haydn and Mozart) his language. His songs were seldom sung in public, mostly only in the circle of his friends. The same in regard to his instrumental music; his C major symphony he himself never heard! So these two geniuses lived at the same time and in the same city, and remained almost unknown to each other—a sad evidence that music, at that time, was not the common property of the public (opera excepted), but only a pastime for certain circles.

Schubert died young?

And did not gain recognition, even in his songs, until some time after his death. Bach has been rescued from obscurity only since the year 1830, and Beethoven's third period was for the greater half of our century designated (and even by musicians) as a sickly—yes, crazed—period.

Schubert's enormous creation in so short a life is incomprehensible to me.

He "sang as the birds sing"—always, and without ceasing—from a full heart, a full throat; gave himself as he was—polished his works but slightly.

That you do not intend to reckon as a merit?

God created woman; certainly the most beautiful of His creations, but *full of faults.* He did not polish them away, being convinced that all

that was faulty in her would be outweighed by her charms. So Schubert in his compositions; his melody outweighs all deficiency, if deficiency there be. One of his most sympathetic attributes is his naturalness. How harmlessly, by the side of the highest and most beautiful, he exhibits the "kreuzfidelen Lerchenfelder Wiener" (in the last movement of the C major string-quartet, in the last movement of the D major pianoforte sonata, in the last movement of the G major fantasie, etc.); and withal the manifoldness and versatility of his creation! And then his songs, "Die Krähe," "Der Doppelgänger," "Du bist die Ruh," "Der Atlas," "Aufenthalt," "Der Erl-König"; his waltzes; then his string-quartets in A and D minor; his "Hungarian Rhapsody"; then his "Moments Musicals"; the Symphony in C major —no! again and again, and a thousand times over and over, Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert occupy the highest pinnacles in music!

As yet you have not explained to me how Chopin and Glinka hold the right to be classed with these.

Vienna has sung its song; music seeks its previous home, North Germany.

You mean German music; as Méhul, Gretry, Cherubini, Spontini, Rossini, and others, did not live in Germany.

They are composers of vocal music exclusively,

hence, for me, not *standard-bearers* of the art of music.

Who, then, in your opinion, is the continuation of the chain?

Weber.

Would you, if he had not written his operas, regard him as a standard-bearer of the art?

Not in the full significance of the word. I could not, however, pass him by, as his pianoforte compositions, much that is new in his treatment of the orchestra, and especially his overtures, stamp him as such. Still, you are quite right in regarding his operas as his greatest works. It is remarkable how decidedly he has become a *type* in all the styles in which he created. Everything that he did has been imitated—the folk-tone (*Freischütz*), the romantic-fantastic (*Oberon*), the lyric-romantic (*Euryanthe*), his arias, his hunting choruses, his overtures, and his pianoforte compositions (Concertstück, etc.). Concerning his pianoforte sonatas, although they do not by any means attain the height of invention, the depth of conception, the earnest emotion, the artistic standard of the Beethoven sonatas, still, in their way, they are highly valuable compositions. For the pianoforte Weber is, as it were, virtuoso-composer.

What do you mean by that?

Compositions in which the "passage" is a chief characteristic of the composer—where brilliancy and

effect occupy the foreground, even at the expense of the musical contents. However, when we remember to what shallowness this style was brought *after him*, we can look upon *his* work only with respect.

Do you care so little for opera in general that you do not consider it worth while to mention its progress side by side with the progress of instrumental music?

If I wished to illustrate to you only *my own* sympathies as regards the progress of our art, I should be obliged now to pass on at once to Mendelssohn. You demand my opinion of everything, however, and so we will first explore two fields which have been prodigiously cultivated, and which, more than anything mentioned heretofore, have entertained and delighted the public. These are — the opera, in vocal music; virtuosity, in instrumental music.

With the opera you will probably begin in Italy?

Both have their beginning there: there the opera (*buffa* and *seria*) blossomed and flourished, developing very quickly and to a high degree; and that, too, in such a manner that—with the exception of France, where, with Lulli, it appears at once in the French language—it was adopted, in the Italian language, over the whole world, until the middle of the present century. The reason for this is probably that the Italian climate and

language have helped to give us the best singers. To this circumstance Italy, however, is indebted for the ever-increasing decline in the art of creation among its composers. They were obliged to write beautiful cantilenas, grand coloratura-arias, whether allowable by the subject of the drama or not, in order to give the singer opportunity to show his skill; and hence they were obliged to give the orchestra only an insignificant *rôle*. For this reason the Italian opera is to-day, for the earnest musician, synonymous with *insignificant*, and *inartistic*. From an æsthetic standpoint this is altogether justifiable; from a purely musical standpoint not entirely so; for a beautiful cantilena is, after all, to be prized, and there are many to be found in Italian opera. Italian opera, in its prime, is the period before Mozart; the number of its composers is legion, and they rank as classic there, in this style. Of the Mozart and after-Mozart periods, the most important are—Salieri, Cimarosa, Paisiello, Paër, and later Rossini; his *Il Barbiere di Seviglia*, truly a master-work of freshness, melody, humour, characteristique; his *Comte Ory*, also his *William Tell*, very remarkable as to colouring and dramatizing, as well as orchestral treatment, notably in the overture, which might be called a work of art, if he had substituted for the last allegro something more appropriate! In his other operas, also, we find the trivial and inartistic

side by side with much that is excellent. It is a not uninteresting fact that he, as well as the Italian composers *before* and *after* him, preserved a more noble tone, and gave the orchestra a more interesting treatment in the operas they wrote for Paris in the French language, than in the operas written for Italy in the Italian language. Rossini ruled the entire European public for a long time—until the appearance of Bellini, and, shortly after, of Donizetti, who, the first by his sweet melody, the second by his *temperament* and, in some measure, modern dramatique, crowded him, with the exception of two or three operas, from the *répertoire.* The public and the artists revelled in these two composers, and the French grand-opera (Meyerbeer) was their only rival—and when one, as I, has heard these operas sung by Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache, by Sontag, Grisi, Persiani, Tadolini, and Jenny Lind, he cannot help revelling in them, which I consequently did in my youth—and thoroughly.

And has Italy done nothing in instrumental music?

We have already spoken of Corelli and D. Scarlatti; after these, nothing worthy of mention was created. Clementi was of great significance in virtuoso and pedagogic sense—but of him later. After these, Bocherini alone remains to be noticed, who has written much chamber-music for

stringed instruments, but which in no way approaches that of Haydn. Of the most importance is that which was done for and on the violin ; after Corelli it was Nardini, Tartini, Viotti, and especially Paganini, who made this instrument musically the most important (after the piano).

France comes now on the list, since in Italy, France, and Germany only, the art of music has made progress worthy of mention ; in other countries its progress so far has been of little or no importance.

Until 1830, indeed ; but from that time lights of various magnitude arise in every corner and end of Europe ; music becomes more and more a universal possession, and almost every country has more or less renowned representatives of this art.

But it is studied scientifically only in these three countries !

From Rameau until Berlioz, with few exceptions, it was the opera, solely and alone, that was cultivated in France. The French cultivated especially the *genre* of comic-opera ; that is, opera with dialogue. Foreigners mostly—who, however, are regarded by the French as representatives of the French school (those only, of course, who have written in the French language)—cultivated the so-called grand-opera ; that is, opera with recitative. They call Lulli, Cherubini, Spontini, Rossini

(Italians), Gluck, Hérold, Meyerbeer (Germans), "*chefs de l'école française.*" The English also call Händel an English composer, because he wrote his oratorios in the English language. I cannot say that this kind of patriotism displeases me.

There is at least more pride in that than in disowning one born and bred in a country and avowing its religion, because his name is a foreign one.

The "opéra-comique" is, properly speaking, the type of French music, and in it they have created most charmingly. Grétry, Méhul, Monsigny, Dalayrac, Isouard, Berton, Boïeldieu, Adam, Auber, Grisar, Massé, Bizet, Delibes, and others, deserve not only the respect of their own nation, but the respect of all nations. Many of these have also written serious operas. Méhul (whose *Joseph in Egypt* is equal to the best in this style); Auber, *Die Stumme von Portici* (*Masaniello*), and others; but still the character of their creations in general remains the opéra-comique. It is worthy of mention that with them the treatment of the orchestra is much more interesting than with the Italian composers: lively rhythm, ingenuity, piquancy, refinement, often excellence, stamp French music so decidedly that they, even in their symphonic creations of to-day, are the principal marks of distinction. What the French nowadays have completely lost is the graceful, simple, charming *chanson*, and that is a pity!

They have become "*phraseurs*" in music (in the comic-opera also). And, indeed, the other nations are not far behind them in this—it seems to be the general evil of our time!

Since the time of the Second Empire, the opéra-comique, this charming, witty, merry, interesting *genre*, has been thrown into the shade by the "operetta," in which the charming has become frivolous; the witty, silly; the merry, vulgar—a sort of comic journal set to music; *à la Journal pour rire*. The really talented inventor of this *genre* was Offenbach; he had many imitators (Hervé, Lecocq, Audran, and others), for anything of *that* kind finds disciples! This style seems lately to be losing ground in France, and Germany evidently intends to raise it again to the comic-opera in the earlier form. The serious (grand) opera was, as already mentioned, mostly in the hands of foreign composers, who, however, were obliged to conform to the demands of the French public—compose in the French language, directing their attention chiefly to declamation—the latter gave, too, the typical character to the French grand opera. Lulli, and, later, Gluck, striving to stem the inbreaking Italianism, had constructed a whole system in this direction; also Cherubini and Spontini (the musical echo of the Napoleon-military-rule) remained true to it. Later the public demanded in the grand-opera, besides this, an

interesting, almost symphonic orchestra, interesting treatment in the subject (especially in wealth of situation), unqualified addition of the ballet, and a grand setting (the grand-opera would not allow of less than five acts). Meyerbeer more than any other composer fulfilled these demands, and has thus become the type of the French grand-opera. This composer is *overvalued* in France, and in Germany *undervalued* by earnest critics; he has, indeed, many sins on his artist-conscience: sickly vanity, longing for immediate success, want of strict self-criticism, pandering to the bad taste of the unmusical public, gloss in musical characteristic; but he has also very great qualities: theatre-blood, highly distinguished orchestral treatment, a highly artistic handling of the massive, powerful, dramatic, virtuoso-technique. Many musicians who abuse him would no doubt be very glad if they were able to imitate him. *Robert le Diable*, *Le Prophète*, and especially *Les Huguenots*, are, at any rate, highly remarkable operatic compositions. Next to him it is Halévy who is counted the most important in France, and his *La Juive* is a work very well worthy of note. From here on it is, with the exception of Rossini, Donizetti, and Verdi, whose several operas were given there, more the French themselves who cultivate the grand-opera: Thomas, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Reyer, and others.

And instrumental music?

Begins with Berlioz, and first develops at the present day.

So now we must turn with the opera question to Germany?

The beginnings of opera in the German language in the first part of the eighteenth century, in Hamburg, have only an historical, yes, almost a merely archæologic interest. There, too, it is the comic-opera alone, which figures in its national language; the serious opera, in the whole of Germany, was presented in the Italian language. The German serious opera is, with few exceptions (Kayser, Fuchs, Mattheson, Hiller), a child of the after-Mozart time, and flourished for some time as *Singspiel* and *Liederspiel*, that is, with spoken dialogue. We touch upon a circumstance here that to me is always a tender point in our art. If the opera is capable of being in any case a possible form of art, it can be so only in case we voluntarily accept a conventional falsehood, in speaking what is sung; if, however, it be sung, then spoken, then sung again, then spoken again, how is an illusion conceivable? Even in a French vaudeville, when, after a witty dialogue or interesting scene, the (incidental) "Bon jour, madame, comment vous portez-vous," is given in a singing voice, it is to me unbearable; but in an earnest, dramatic, lyric, or fantastic work (opera!), then melodrama in a

French scene-of-terror, where, in a poisoning-scene or a midnight raid, etc., the violins (*con sordini*) begin the *tremolo*, is to me more acceptable; and when I remember that Mozart wrote his *Magic Flute*, Beethoven his *Fidelio*, Weber his *Freischütz*, with a *spoken* dialogue, it makes me entirely unhappy.

Are you disturbed by the mixture of poetry and prose in Shakespeare's plays also?

There, it is different persons who speak differently; the unimportant persons speak in prose, the important in poetry. But in the opera, the person who has just sung begins to speak, or one who has been speaking begins to sing. Oh, ruling taste, a frightful thing in art!

I did not know that in Italy operas with spoken dialogue existed.

For the comic-opera the Italians invented the "*recitativo secco*," a very proper way of speaking musically. The serious opera they sing throughout.

In this, then, they take precedence of other nations in music?

Perhaps, however, in this light only.

Gluck, Mozart, and the German opera in general, developed, however, under the influence of the Italians?

On Gluck and Mozart only an outward influence, necessitated, above all, by the language and by the prevailing forms in musical works; but

neither on the melody, nor on the musical expression, nor on the progression of ideas is any influence apparent. Gluck is neither an Italian nor a French musician, although he wrote his operas in these two languages; so, too, Mozart is not an Italian musician, although he wrote the most of his operas in that language. Gluck wrote Gluck-music, and Mozart wrote Mozart-music, and the German calls them both *his own* because he feels the German musician in them, although they wrote in a foreign language.

Are you in favour of or opposed to national creation in music?

The nationality of that land in which a composer is born and bred will, in my opinion, always be recognised in his creations. He may live in another land, and write in another language—as evidence Händel, Gluck, Mozart, and others. There is, however, a studied national creation (very much in vogue in our day); this, although very interesting, cannot, in my estimation, command the sympathy of the united world: awakens an ethnographic interest at most. A melody that would charm tears from a Finlander would fall quite coldly upon a Spaniard; a dance-rhythm that would compel a Hungarian to hop and spring would not disturb the repose of an Italian, etc. It is true that the dance-rhythm of one nation may be so grafted upon another that it finally

accustoms itself to it—yes, even enjoys it (as, for instance, the waltz has become universal); but of complete unity of feeling, of the same enthusiasm in their melody and dances, two nations can never be. The composers of the studied national style must rest satisfied with the acknowledgment (often adoration) of their own country, which is not to be undervalued, as it probably has great value and so gives much satisfaction.

You have omitted to give me the names of the German opera-composers.

The nomenclature is an exceedingly voluminous one. In the comic opera, from Dittersdorf, Schenk, Müller, to Lortzing, Flotow, Götze, and many others; in the lyric and dramatic, from Winter, Weigl, Kreutzer, to Wagner, Goldmark, Kretschmar, Nessler, and many others; in the operetta from Strauss, Suppé, Millöcker, to those growing up daily in our midst. The most important of these are already known to you, the others enlarge the number rather than enrich the art.

You spoke of a field of virtuosity which we should explore?

Yes, the second field, which, next to the opera, rules the public entirely. But before we turn to this, we must again clearly review the after-Beethoven period in instrumental music.

Is this, until the time of Schumann, really worthy of mention?

Only a very few composers in Germany devoted themselves to vocal composition exclusively; the most of them cultivated almost every style—as Weber, who, besides being opera and song-composer, was pianoforte-composer. Spohr, the head of the German school of the violin, was a composer in all styles of music (in all distinguished, but in all, too, exhibiting mannerism to monotony, hence, probably, not enduring; but works such as his opera, *Jessonda*, his symphony, "Die Weihe der Töne," in C minor; several chamber-music works, and especially his violin concertos, assure him at all events an honourable place in the literature of music).

Marschner, the most important German opera-composer between Weber and Wagner, has written much instrumental music besides, most of it chamber-music; Lachner, Reissiger, and others likewise.

And Mendelssohn?

To give to his appearance the value which it deserves, we must not leave unmentioned a space of time which brought us much indeed worthy of mention in vocal music, but in instrumental is known as the time of the "Capellmeister-music."

What is the meaning of that term?

It has reference to those composers who wrote according to all the rules of the art, and after given models, but who were destitute of all creative impulse and of the creative vein.

And who are these functionaries of the art?

All those who lived in the said time. I speak of instrumental music, and so even the names of Marschner, Reissiger, Lindpaintner, Fesca, Kalliwoda, and many others, must be enumerated.

Did you not just before mention Marschner among the great ones?

His operas, *Vampire*, *Templer und Jüdin*, and especially *Hans Heiling*, give him a place of honour among composers; but in his pianoforte trios, and other instrumental compositions, even in the overtures to his operas, he belongs to the above category. Lachner, we must not omit to mention, touched in a measure by the modern spirit, made himself conspicuous in his last days by his orchestra suites; giving evidence of his old masterly technique and of rejuvenated power in invention. Now bring this time home very clearly to your mind; in the opera *Epigonenthum;* in oratorio and church style, dry barrenness, and pedantry; and in the symphony and chamber-style, Capellmeister-music; in piano solo the most shallow opera-fantasie and variation-scribble—can you estimate how beneficial to the art of music the appearance of Mendelssohn must have been?

How is it, then, that to-day, and even by musicians, he is slighted?

One principal reason for that is the very great

esteem he enjoyed during his lifetime; a later reaction would necessarily come; and, too, it is not to be denied that he, in comparison with the other great masters of art, was wanting in depth, earnestness, and greatness; but that was in him compensated for by so many other qualities that the public, I am convinced, will certainly return to him again with love and reverence, and still greatly delight in him.

His chief work was instrumental music?

All branches of art, except the opera, had in him one of the noblest representatives; his creations are master-works in completeness of form, technique, and beauty of tone; and further, he was a manifold creator.

His *Midsummer Night's Dream* is a musical revelation! New and genial in the invention, in orchestral colouring, in humour, in lyricism, in romanticism, and in fairy-like type. His "Songs without Words," a genuine treasure in lyric style of pianoforte tone-perfection; his six preludes and fugues for pianoforte, a splendid work of modern mode in this old form, especially the first (E minor); his violin concerto is a *unicum* of beauty, freshness, grateful technique and noble virtuosity; his overture to *Fingal's Cave* is a pearl in musical literature. These are, in my opinion, his most genial works, but his oratorios, psalms, symphonies, chamber-music, songs, etc., are also

works which place him among the heroes of the art. In general I would designate his creations as the swan-song of classicism.

His music has never deeply moved me.

> "Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,
> Who ne'er the sorrow-laden nights," etc.

Mendelssohn and also Meyerbeer were the children of wealthy parents, enjoyed the most refined training and education; were, in their homes, surrounded by the most intellectually select society; pursued art, not as a means of subsistence but followed it as an impulse of the mind; knew, of life's bitterness, at most unsatisfied ambition or injured vanity, at the beginning of their musical career; knew the cares of neither livelihood nor position, etc., and this is heard in their creations: no tears, no agonies of the soul, no bitterness, and almost no complaint.

And still Mendelssohn stands so high in your opinion?

Yes, because he created the most beautiful and perfect music in abundance, and because he rescued instrumental music from ruin.

And his contemporary, Schumann?

The new spirit (Romanticism) that had been hovering in the literature of all lands during the years 25 to 50 of this century, found in Schumann its musical echo; even the war against the formal, the scholastic, the pseudo-classic, had

in him its musical champion; he warred against the Philistine (against Capellmeister-music, against "rococo"-critique, against the perverted taste of the public, and that gave him in the beginning of his artistic activity material for extraordinarily interesting and musically new creation, especially for the pianoforte. He was undoubtedly more tender, warmer, more soulful, more romantic, richer in fantasy, more subjective, than Mendelssohn. To me he is most sympathetic in his pianoforte compositions (Kreisleriana, Phantasiestücke, *Études symphoniques*, Carnival, Phantasie in C major, and many others, are pearls in the literature of the pianoforte; and his pianoforte concerto in A minor is just such a *unicum* in pianoforte literature as the Mendelssohn violin concerto in the literature of the violin), after these, his songs; I rank his orchestral works and his larger vocal compositions as third of the list. New pianoforte forms (not always grateful—*dankbar*—but always interesting), new rhythm, rich and new harmony, new forms combined with the most beautiful invention and wonderfully charming melody; all this stamps him as one of the greatest we possess in music.

And absolutely without fault?

That I do not say—some rhythmic monotony, harmonic over-loading, predilection for the song-form in his pianoforte works, causing us to miss

at times great flights of thought, great outlines; often faulty instrumentation in his orchestral and chamber-music (the doubling of the voices), many times mere contrapuntal treatment of the singing-voices in his larger vocal compositions, are perhaps light shadow-sides of his creation, but that all vanishes in presence of the wonderful beauty of his thoughts.

How does the Schumann song compare with the Schubert?

It is difficult to make the comparison. To me Schubert's songs are more sympathetic because more natural, tender, simple; on the other hand, Schumann's are often finer, more poetic—at all events, the song-literature of Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn (since their time, too, very much that is beautiful has been created in this branch) is a golden circlet in the crown of German lyric.

Who comes next on the list?

He whose association with my chosen ones caused you so much astonishment.

Chopin? Now you arouse my curiosity.

You will perhaps have noticed that all the greatest of those of whom we have spoken until now, have entrusted their most *intime*—yes, I may almost say, most beautiful—to the pianoforte; but the Pianoforte-*Bard*, the Pianoforte-*Rhapsodist*, the Pianoforte-*Mind*, the Pianoforte-*Soul*, is *Chopin*.

Whether the spirit of this instrument breathed

upon him or he upon it—*how* he wrote for it, I do not know, but only an entire blending one with the other could call such compositions to life. Tragic, romantic, lyric, heroic, dramatic, fantastic, soulful, sweet, dreamy, brilliant, grand, simple—all possible expressions are found in his compositions, and are all sung by him upon this instrument in perfect beauty.

You are becoming extravagant!

Would you like to know the names of the compositions that justify it? His Preludes (to me the pearls of his works); the greater half of his Études; his Nocturnes; his Polonaises, E flat minor, C sharp minor, F sharp minor, A flat major, especially the A major and C minor, which always seem to me a picture (the A major) of Poland's greatness and (the C minor) of Poland's downfall; his four Ballades, his Scherzos, B minor and B flat minor; his Sonatas, B flat minor and B minor; the first of which is a whole drama, with its last movement (after the very typical Funeral March), which I would name, "*Night winds sweeping over churchyard graves*," and with all of these, last, but not least, his Mazurkas. His Polonaises and Mazurkas excepted, he has written no studiedly Polish music, but in all of his compositions we hear him relate rejoicingly Poland's greatness: singing, mourning, weeping over Poland's later downfall, and that all in the most beautiful, the

most musical way. From a purely musical standpoint, how beautiful in invention, how perfect in technique and form, how interesting and new in harmony, and often how great! Withal, it is not to be forgotten that he too (one of the very few) developed of himself, with the exception of a few first efforts (where the Hummel influence in the predilection for passages is evident) and the highly interesting fact that he is the only one of the composers who, conscious of his speciality, creates for this speciality (pianoforte), and, with the exception of a few songs, attempts no other style of composition. He was indeed the soul of the pianoforte.

To me, too, he is very sympathetic, but I should still not have thought that he could be the object of such deification.

Moreover, he is to me as an exhalation of the third epoch in our art.

May I ask you to explain your division of the time into epochs a little more clearly to me? I do not understand it fully.

I am not delivering you a discourse on the history of music; we are merely talking over the progress of music in general and of its most important representatives. As you already know, I regard Palestrina as the beginning of music *as an art*, and reckon from him as the first *epoch* of our art, which I call the *organ and vocal epoch;* and as the greatest representatives of this epoch, and its

point of culmination, I recognise Bach and Händel. The second *epoch*, which I call the *instrumental epoch*, *i.e.*, the development of the pianoforte and of the orchestra, I reckon from Philipp Em. Bach, with Haydn and Mozart until Beethoven inclusive; recognising the last as the greatest representative and point of culmination of this *epoch*. The third *epoch*, the lyric-romantic, I reckon from Schubert, with Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin, whom I recognise as its last representative. Everything else in regard to this question you will find in the history of music.

I will try to follow you in your views.

Now comes the second name that caused you so much astonishment, that is, *Glinka*. We have spoken before of the striving for the national in music, my opinion of which you already know; but Glinka is so distinguished in this endeavour that he stands high above all others who have made like attempts. Schiller says, "The gods never come alone," and that is noticeable also in our art; with every manifestation of art whole groups arise; so, too, in the endeavour for national creation in music. We will review these attempts in the different countries: Erkel in Hungary; Smetana in Bohemia; the majority of the composers in Sweden and Norway; earlier Balfe, and now the majority of English composers, etc.;—from all of these we hear the all-world music besides

the romanza, or the chorus, or the dance of national character. With Glinka this is not the case. From the first note to the last, in the overture as well as in the vocal part of his operas (recitative, aria, ensemble), all is of a national character—melody, harmony, yes, even the treatment of the orchestra. He has usually the combination of two nationalities in his operas; in his *Leben für den Zar*, Russian and Polish; in his *Ruszlan und Liudmilla*, Russian and Circassian, the character of both nationalities is heard throughout at the same time, united with the most perfect mastery and technique.

Did he not write after the Italian model?

The form he has retained, living under the influence of the Italian opera, which ruled exclusively in Russia until a short time ago; but the melody and harmony, the invention and mood, always retain a specifically national colouring.

So far as known to me, he was a composer of vocal music exclusively.

He has not written many instrumental works, but among them a capriccio on the folk-song, "Kamarinskaja," which has become the type for Russian instrumental music, and is really of great geniality; very beautiful *entr'acte* music to a tragedy, *Fürst Cholmsky*, in which the Jewish element appears in remarkable colouring; extremely interesting orchestral works on Spanish folk-songs

and dances ; a few things for pianoforte alone. His chief branch is, however, the opera, and in spite of that he is one of my five.

I cannot say that you have entirely convinced me with reference to your five chosen ones, but in all that has reference to Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert I agree with you, and can even comprehend, too, that you, as a pianist, so revel in Chopin ; and as a Russian, in Glinka.

Before we enter upon the new era of composition, the era of to-day (the fourth epoch of music as an art), we must explore the field of virtuosity divided into two epochs—the epoch, including the first half of our century, in which the virtuoso brought out mostly his own compositions ; and the succeeding epoch, in which he appears mostly as executant artist of the compositions of others. For us, the earlier epoch only is of interest, as it alone could exercise an influence on the progress of the art of music.

Of the wind instruments we can say only a very little, as the virtuoso on them could have influence only in a technical sense, and as regards the construction of the instrument and its use in the orchestra. Their literature has always been a cheerless one, with the exception of some few compositions written by the great composers for them (Händel, Weber). Of the violin until Paganini and Spohr we have already spoken ; if we add

the names Rode, Kreutzer, Molique, Lipinsky, Beriot, Vieuxtemps, David, Ernst, Wieniawsky, whose compositions are of great importance for the instrument, although not for the art in general (for the latter, however, all that such masters as Bach, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn have written for this instrument is of the greatest importance), we may now leave this instrument.

The literature for violoncello—whose earlier representatives were Romberg, Duport, and others; later, Servais, Davidoff, Popper, and others—is still less significant than that of the violin, for art in general. The great significance as regards technique of Paganini for the violin, Servais for the violoncello, and their thus indirect influence on the art in general, must not remain unnoticed. Of the influence of the vocal-virtuoso on the composers (in no case beneficial) we have also spoken before; and now we come to that instrument which, as to the art, occupies the principal place: viz., the pianoforte. On account of its compass, only inferior to that of the organ (taking precedence of the latter, however, in power of varying the tone: *piano* and *forte*), it must of course be the instrument most attractive to the musician; in addition to the advantage of having this compass entirely at his command, he has the advantage of individual rendering (so dear to the musician: for is he not with any other instrument, dependent not upon himself but

upon numerous conditions?). Thus the pianoforte has become as it were the photographic apparatus of the musician; the dictionary; the musical encyclopædia of the public; *the instrument* of music! Every great composer was at the same time a pianoforte virtuoso; of those we have already spoken; now we must speak of the great pianoforte virtuosos who at the same time were composers. We must begin with Clementi, whom we may call the father, or the teacher, of modern pianoforte virtuosity. Who the teachers of Scarlatti, Couperin, Rameau, Bach, Händel, Haydn, Mozart, and even Beethoven were, we do not know, and can only wonder how they acquired such technique (virtuosity); especially Scarlatti, Bach, and Beethoven, whose technique is still, to-day, a hard nut for us to crack. Clementi is the first representative of the pianoforte pedagogic, and his "Gradus ad Parnassum" remains, even until the present day, the surest guide to virtuosity. His sonatas (a few among them are not without artistic value) are of the type of that scholastic period in which, under the cloak of classic form, the chief interest lies in virtuoso-technique. Not the façade, but the rear portal of the Temple of Art, is represented by such names as Dussek, Steibelt, Hummel, Cramer, Moscheles, Czerny, Field, Kalkbrenner, Herz, and many others, with whom first the sonata fades away in meaninglessness, then the pianoforte-

concerto cultivated merely from the standpoint of the *passage*, polaccas, rondo brilliant, and *à la Cosaque*, were principal works, and, sadly enough, the favourite amusement of the public. The variation was the most horribly misused. This oldest of the instrumental forms, which in Beethoven rises to the ethic, sinks to the dulness of Herz,* to unfold again, however, with Mendelssohn, and especially Schumann, into beautiful being. The pedagogic étude is the only branch of art which at that time preserved a worthy position.

But the names you mentioned are mostly contemporary with Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber ?

They ruled the public entirely, however : the pianoforte-Beethoven was soon after his death (except for two or three sonatas which had attained some popularity) the private *cultus* of a very few music-fanatics ; the pianoforte-Schubert was entirely ignored ; the pianoforte-Weber was, it is true, the order of the day, but only in a few of his works, and merely as a more earnest expression of the then reigning literature. But Hummel, Moscheles, and Field are personages who shine as meteors among the others mentioned.

Hummel, if he had not been sicklied with

* Mendelssohn even felt himself moved to give his variations the title " Variations Sérieuses," in order to distinguish them from the variations in vogue at that day.

sticking exactly to models and with the passage-craze, might have been counted among the *real* composers; for works like his sonata in F sharp minor, his four-hand sonata in A flat major, his fantasie in E flat major, his septet, his concerto in A minor (and especially that in B minor), give him entire right to a place in the *parterre de rois* in the Temple of Art. So, too, Moscheles, whose concerto in G minor will always remain a beautiful work, is, although stiffly scholastic, one of the first who brought us the fantasie (not variation) on opera themes, bringing with it a singing and dramatic rendering in pianoforte playing.

Field creates in a small shape, it is true, but is of valuable influence in his nocturnes.

But now — again simultaneously — Thalberg, Liszt, and Henselt appear—three personages who give the pianoforte an entirely new character, freeing it from the scale and passage style, and qualifying it for the canto with accompaniment (arpeggio), for the orchestral and for the polyphonic (broader harmony) style. Thalberg and Liszt crowd out the variations on an opera theme, and introduce the fantasy on several opera themes, not, however, with the Moscheles simplicity, but with until then unknown virtuosity (as climax-effect allowing two themes to sing at the same time, etc.). Liszt and Henselt gave the étude æsthetic character—going from the purely peda-

gogic to the artistic (like the "étude" in the art of painting); gave each a name or title ("Mazeppa," "Si oiseau j'étais, à toi je volerais," "Orage, tu ne saurais m'abattre," etc.*). These three composers introduce the transcription of songs and orchestral works for the piano; dance-rhythms with bravura and concert treatment; and open, in general, the era of transcendental virtuosity for the pianoforte!

And what is the influence that they could have on the art?

Virtuosity exercises an immediate influence on composition in general, widens the range of expression, multiplies the means for composition. As each of the great composers was a virtuoso—that is, had an excellent technique on his instrument—he influenced the style of composition of the *minorum gentium*, and so one went hand in hand with the other; the composer was influenced by virtuosity, and this again by the composer. Besides this, virtuosity influenced the construction of the instrument. When Beethoven, in his sonata, Op. 110, in the beginning of the adagio, allows a note to be struck twenty-eight

* Moscheles' "Études Caracteristiques" are works of the same epoch. Chopin also wrote études at this time without especial names, without programme, but with a world of psychologic content; for instance, the ones in E major, E flat minor, C sharp minor, B flat minor, C minor, and others. I separate the études of these two composers from the above-mentioned ones, because they seem to me of a musically more serious character.

times, it is a challenge to the instrument-maker to try if possible to prolong the tone of the pianoforte.

Why do the critics war against the virtuoso and slight him?

Against those who use virtuosity as an end and not as a means. I must protest, in a measure, against this ideal standpoint. I think, "*there must be such fellows, too;*" for, firstly, perfection always commands respect, no matter in what field it is found; and, secondly, their influence, if only indirect, is still apparent in the art. Thus Paganini's compositions are not of especial worth in an artistic sense, but Paganini gave new life to the violin; Servais's violoncello compositions are of even less worth, Servais, however, gave new life to the 'cello; Thalberg's pianoforte compositions are of the most indifferent art, but Thalberg gave new life to the pianoforte, etc. But since the virtuoso of to-day does not venture to play his own compositions, but only the compositions of others, he is not able to give us what he *could*, but what he *must*. Hence the downfall of virtuosity; for one may dare only in his own compositions to "break all bounds," and this "breaking all bounds" furthers virtuosity. The holding fast to prescribed and given rules is all very nice and praiseworthy, but it does not advance virtuosity. At an earlier day the virtuoso incited the instrument-maker by his demands, to perfection of con-

struction; now, the instrument-maker tries to induce the virtuoso, by all means of invention, to perfection of technique. There are many very excellent piano-players to-day, but as virtuoso, in the sense of advancement, I can name only Tausig, the last; the same with the violin, we may call Wieniawsky its last virtuoso; of the violoncello, Davidoff; and in song Viardot-Garcia.

In this point I partly agree with you. I believe, too, that we require the executive artist of to-day to repress his individuality in too great a degree, and have created, in this way, a kind of musical respectability, which is interesting but ultimately rather wearisome.

And now you will be horrified with what I am about to say—I think that with the death of Schumann and Chopin "*finis musicæ*"!

Ha, ha, ha! it cannot be possible that you mean that seriously?

I mean it perfectly seriously: I speak of musical creation, melody, thought. There is much that is interesting, and perhaps valuable, written to-day, no doubt; but nothing beautiful, great, deep or lofty, especially not in instrumental music —and that is, as you know, my standard.

How will you prove this?

With the excess of colouring at the expense of drawing; of technique at the expense of thought; of frame at the expense of picture.

And now I would like to have a nearer and more precise explanation.

Three names represent the standard-bearers of the new era in music (fourth epoch of the art of music)—Berlioz, Wagner, and Liszt. The most interesting of the three, even on account of the time at which he appeared (in '30, by the way), and because he did not *become* an innovator, but declared himself at the very beginning of his musical activity *as such*—is Berlioz. He discovered new tone-effects in the orchestra, held to no prescribed form, regarded the treatment of the text (declamation) as of the greatest worth; with tone-painting (programme-music) introduced the realistic in music (mark the attempt to realise the latter in his *Requiem*, where, in the "Tuba mirum," he ranges a host of brass instruments at different places in the hall or church); took delight in strange, peculiar instrumentation (whole chords for eight pairs of drums, chords for contrabassi, *divisi;* harmonics for the stringed instruments of the orchestra, and other things of the same kind). But specifically musical thought, melodic invention, beauty of form, richness in harmony (in this respect he was really weak), are not to be found in him. Dazzlingly coloured, effective, interesting he is in everything, but his works are too much pondered over, neither beautiful nor great, neither deep nor lofty; and if one of his compositions

be played on the pianoforte,* even as a duet, the colouring of the instrumentation is lost, and there remains — nothing; but play the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven upon the pianoforte, even with two hands (*i.e.*, with less tone), and one is overwhelmed with its greatness of thought and soulful expression! One work I wish to except— it is the overture to the *Roman Carnival* — a splendid composition, even in musical invention.

The next in interest is *Wagner.*

Truly, to me, he is the most interesting.

While I was visiting Mendelssohn one Sunday in Berlin, in '45 or '46, I met Taubert there, who, noticing the orchestral score of *Tannhäuser* on the piano, asked Mendelssohn what he thought of the composer of that opera? Mendelssohn answered —"*A man who writes both text and music to his operas is no common man at all events.*" Yes, no common man, but still not reversing my opinion of the modern composers. He is also highly interesting, very valuable; but beautiful or great, deep or lofty, in a specifically musical sense, he is *not.*

Would you deny him novelty, too?

He has worked in so many directions that it is difficult to give a general opinion of him. He is, besides, so unsympathetic to me in his art

* In my opinion, this is generally the best means of judging an orchestral work, opera, oratorio, etc. as to its merits in a purely musical sense. It is like looking at the photograph of an oil-painting.

principles that my view of him would only annoy you.

I have had the patience to hear all that you have said until now, and so will be able to listen to your opinion of him.

He looks upon *vocal music* as the highest expression of music; for me music (with the exception of the song and church-music) begins where words cease. He speaks of a *Union of Arts* (combination of all arts for the opera). I think that in such case we could not do entire justice to either. He advocates the legend (the supernatural) as material for opera text. In my estimation the legend is always a cold expression of art; it may be an interesting and poetic *play*, but never a *drama*, for we cannot sympathise with a supernatural being.

When a despot compels a father to shoot an apple from the head of his son; or when a wife rescues her husband from the dagger-thrust of his enemy by throwing herself between them; or when a son is obliged to disown his mother publicly, and declare her mentally deranged in order to save her life, etc.—it stirs the inmost heart, be it spoken or sung, or merely represented in pantomime. But when a hero makes himself invisible in a Tarn-cap; or transcendent love is produced by a love-draught; or a knight appears drawn by a swan, which shall at last unmask itself as a prince—it may be all very beautiful, very poetic for

eye and ear, but the heart, the soul, remain entirely apathetic. A *Leit-motiv* for certain personages or situations is such a naïve proceeding that it leads to the comic rather than appeals to earnest thought. The suggestion (*Anspielung*)—rather an old device in the art—is sometimes effective, but will not admit, however, of abuse ; but the resounding of the same motive at each appearance of a character, or when he is only spoken of, and the same for particular situations, is hypercharacteristic—yes, I may say, almost caricature. The *exclusion* of arias and *ensembles* in an opera is, in my opinion, psychologically incorrect. The aria in the opera is the same as the monologue in drama—the state of mind of a character before or after certain events, and so is the *ensemble*, the expression of the emotions of several characters. How can it be excluded ? Characters who speak only to each other, never to themselves (that is, the public) become uninteresting, because one cannot discover *whether anything*, and *what*, is taking place in their minds. A love-duo, in which no moment of mutual bliss (singing together) is permitted, cannot be quite sincere ; the eye-to-eye, heart-to-heart resounding "I love thee!" is wanting ! The orchestra in his operas is too much of a good thing ; it lessens the interest in the vocal part, and although it, according to his intention, is to express all that is taking place in the minds of the actors (as they do not express it themselves), the

additional importance it gains thereby can only be an evil, for it makes the singing on the stage almost superfluous. One feels often like begging that it may be silenced so that he may hear what is going on on the stage. It would be difficult to find a more interesting orchestra in opera than that of *Fidelio*, and in it this necessity is not for one moment felt. Making the change of scene *invisible* by means of rising vapours is really too unbearable. Theatrical impossibilities cannot be remedied It is impossible to make a change of scene any other way than by changing the scene; whether the scene sink or rise, whether an intervening curtain fall or vapours arise, it is the same—the illusion is disturbed. But any art of disturbance is, after all, to be preferred to the Hiss-symphony of rising vapours! Darkening the auditorium during the performance is rather a caprice than a real æsthetic necessity. The proportion of illumination gained by the stage and impersonators by this means is really not so important that the spectator should be obliged to suffer the longing for matches for a whole evening. For this innovation the theatre-directors alone will return him thanks, on account of the reduction in the expense of illumination. The *invisible orchestra*, which is of real effect only in the first scene of his *Rheingold*, is a hyper-ideal demand, which for no other opera—not even for his own—will stand the

test. The muffled sound of the orchestra in this novelty makes it undesirable; aside from that, invisible music is effective only in the church, where you look *within* yourself, not *about* you. There are a very few compositions, mostly of Beethoven or Chopin, which gain in effect when heard in this manner; but, for example, the *Tannhäuser* overture would, at any rate, lose in effect if one could not see the movements of the arms in the violin-figure at the close. From an ideal standpoint there is much to disturb one in seeing or hearing a work of art, but one submits to it, and must not demand impossibilities; hence the sight of the conductor and of the musicians of the orchestra, in the performance of an opera, is not so frightful that the purely musical effect of the beauty of tone should be sacrificed to avoid it.

You speak always of his art principles, but say nothing of his music.

The doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope has most likely disgusted many with the Catholic Church. Had Wagner composed, brought out, and published his operas without expressing his own opinions about them in his writings, they would have been praised, blamed, loved, or not, as in the case of other composers; but to declare himself as the only source of happiness, awakened opposition and protest. Some of his works are indeed worthy

of respect (*Lohengrin*, *Meistersinger*, and the *Faust* overture I like best of his works), but the principles and pretensions in his musical creations disgust me with most of them. The lack of naturalness, simplicity, makes them unsympathetic to me. All the characters in his operas stride about buskined (musically speaking), always declaiming, never speaking; always pathetic, never dramatic; always as gods or demigods, never as human beings—as simple mortals. Everything makes the impression of the six-foot Alexandrine verse—of cold, forced alliteration. His melody is either lyric or pathetic—no other mood is to be heard. It, certainly, is noble and broad, but always *only* noble and broad; void of rhythmic charm and of variety, hence lacking entirely diversity of musical character; neither a Zerlina nor Leonora is imaginable from him—even in the case of his Evchen in the *Meistersinger*, the diminutive *chen* is present in the *name* only, and not to be heard in the music. His melodies and musical thoughts never depict character; the text alone does that (the *Leitmotiv* indicates only the outer, not the inner character); hence his operas (with few exceptions), played upon the pianoforte, without underlying text, would be mostly unintelligible; but *Don Juan*, *Fidelio*, *Freischütz*, played upon the piano would always bring before one a satisfactory picture of the different characters, yes, even of the whole

action of the opera. His orchestra is indeed new and imposing, but not seldom monotonous in the means of effect or in impassioned parts; often trying to the nerves where playing softly as well as in the energetic, powerful parts; wanting in economy and variety of shading, because Wagner, like everybody nowadays, paints (musically) from beginning to end of his works with all the colours at his command. Thus he is no doubt a highly interesting apparition in music, but in comparison with the great masters of the past, specifically musically, for me, of very questionable character!

*Vox populi* declares him a genius.

The public has heard and read so often of its own incapacity to recognise a genius during his lifetime, that it is now ready to declare anyone a genius, out of mere fear of bringing upon itself the reproach of non-recognition.

But *you* do not recognise that Wagner breathed a new life into the opera.

Every art has its own conditions of life, its especial claims, its limits, etc.—also every branch of art. To wish to make anything else out of an opera *than* an opera may no doubt be very interesting, but it annuls the opera. It seems to me like the pianoforte manufacturers' attempt to make string or wind instrument "attachments" to the pianoforte in order to prolong or change the character of the tone—a wholly useless attempt.

An Adagio of Beethoven or a Nocturne of Chopin is conceived and intended for the pianoforte, and changing its tone-character, its arrangement for another instrument is like *colouring a white marble statue* (the arranging of an orchestral work for the pianoforte is different—that is musical photography). Wagner is then supposed to create a new branch of art (music-drama)—whether it was necessary and whether it possesses vitality enough to live, time must teach us!

You have not succeeded in taking away my admiration for him.

I am far from wishing to force my opinion upon you, in any one of the questions we have discussed so far. I merely express them to you. The third, "Ars Militans" is Liszt—"Demon of music" I would call him! Inflaming, intoxicating by his fantasticalness, bewitching by his grace, raising one with him in his flight to the highest height, and dragging one with him to the deepest depth; taking on and off all forms: ideal and real at once; knowing all and able to do all; but—false in all, insincere, contentious, theatrical, and bearing within himself the evil principle. He has two periods in his artistic career:—the first, the Virtuoso-period; the second, the Composer-period. The first is, in my estimation, his most illustrious. Unrivalled and unapproachable in piano-playing, highly interesting in his Virtuoso com-

positions (opera-fantasies, études, song-transcriptions, Hungarian rhapsodies, smaller concert-pieces, etc.), he shone the most brilliant star in the musical firmament from the year '30 until '52, dazzling the public of all Europe with his light. Appearing at the same time as Thalberg, one need only look over the fantasias of both on themes from *Don Juan* to become aware of the difference—wide as heaven—that distinguishes them. Thalberg the bedizened, polished, insignificant, and perfect man of society (in a musical sense); Liszt, the poetic, romantic, interesting, highly musical, imposing individuality—with long, shaggy hair, with a Dante profile, with a captivating personality. His piano-playing, words are far too poor to describe—incomparable in every way; culmination of everything that pianoforte rendering could require. What a grievous pity that the phonograph did not exist in the years '40 to '50, to receive his playing and hold it for the future generations who can have no idea of real pianoforte virtuosity.

One must have heard Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg, and Henselt to know what genuine piano-playing means. Added to all his greatness as pianoforte virtuoso, Liszt has the inestimable merit to have helped by word, pen, and his art, many an unknown, forgotten, or unappreciated composer to recognition, and to have presented them to the public. His period of composition—from 1853

—is, in my opinion, of a very sorry kind. In each of his compositions "Man merkt die Absicht und wird davon verstimmt." Programme-music carried to the highest extreme, eternal posing; in his church music, before God; in his orchestral works, before the public; in his song-transcriptions, before the composer;* in his Hungarian rhapsodies, before the gipsies—Enough! always and in all, posing. *Dans les arts il faut faire grand* was a common expression of his—hence the sprawling character of his compositions. His desire for novelty (*à tout prix*) gave him the idea of forming whole compositions of one and the same theme — sonata, concerto, symphonic poem, all with one theme only—an absolutely unmusical proceeding. A theme has a certain character, a mood; if it be forced to vary its character and mood by change of tempo and rhythm, the whole composition loses in character and mood, and can, at the highest, only rise to the variation.† The forms of composition are not

* His most genial transcription is that of Schubert's *Erl König;* the majority of the others are made very unpleasing and unsatisfactory by the use of the melody as phrase, in various registers, and by changing or adding to it.

† The C major Fantasia of Schubert is also built upon a theme. It is, however, first, a fantasia—thus, logical freedom in the form; second, it is in four movements, each of which is thoroughly worked out in a decided mood. Hence no episodic appearance of the motives—a little adagio tempo, a little allegro, a little of scherzo character, and a little in tragic character, etc.

the caprice of *one* composer, but have developed with the times and æsthetic necessities. So with the Sonata form—to set it aside, means to extemporise; a fantasia is, however, not a symphony, not a sonata, not a concerto. Architecture is nearest allied to music in its fundamental principles. Can a formless house, or church, or any other building, be imagined? or a structure where the *façade* is a church, another part of the structure a railway station, another part a floral pavilion, and still another part a factory, etc.? Hence, lack of form in music is improvisation; yes, borders almost on *divagation.* Symphonic poems (so he calls his orchestral works) are supposed to be another new form of art; whether a necessity and vital enough to live, time, as in the case of Wagner's music-drama, must teach us. His orchestral instrumentation exhibits the same mastery as that of Berlioz and Wagner—even bears their stamp. With that, however, it is to be remembered that his pianoforte is the orchestral-pianoforte, not only in the sense of power, but also in the variety of tone-colour; and his orchestra the pianoforte-orchestra, for his orchestral compositions sound like pianoforte compositions set for orchestra. All in all, I see in Berlioz, Wagner, and Liszt the virtuoso-composers, and would be glad to believe that their "breaking all bounds" may be an advantage to the coming genius. In the sense, how-

ever, of specifically musical creation, I can recognise none of them as a composer. In addition to all I have noticed so far, all three of them are wanting in the chief charm of creation: the *naïve*—that stamp of geniality, and at the same time proof that the genius after all is but a human being. Their influence on the composers of the day is great, but, as I believe, of unhealthy kind. It is not uninteresting to observe in this particular, of *which* of them, and *where*, the influence is greater. In Germany it is Wagner, on most of the young composers; Liszt on a few instrumental composers. In France and Russia only Berlioz and Liszt, and on the instrumental composers alone, since in France opera still follows Meyerbeer's lead, while in Russia opera expresses itself in the studied national style. In Italy it is Liszt alone whose influence has turned the young composers to instrumental composition—a branch which, until now, seemed against the nature of the Italians, and I believe that it will eventually remain so.

For you, then, the art period of to-day is only a transition period?

At best. *Whether* it will develop, and into *what*, time will teach us. I shall probably not live to see, and so I weep by the waters of Babylon, and for me the harp is silent.

If that is really so, then you have eaten of the

Tree of Knowledge, and for that reason lose your Paradise of delight.

Only the pleasures of memory are mine still.

In your opinion, there is nothing more that is beautiful and great to await in music?

Who can undertake to predict the future? I speak only, and alone, of to-day.

But the living, as Brahms, Dvorák, Grieg, Goldmark, Massenet, Saint-Saens, Verdi, Gounod, Tschaikowsky, and others, of the composers; Joachim, Sarasate, Bülow, D'Albert, Stockhausen, Faure, Patti, and others, of the executive art?

*De vivis nihil nisi bene!* And, besides, most of those you mention are children of an earlier epoch. I mean an after-growth.

Well, if one take no pleasure in the music of to-day he can enjoy the older music; it is offered him to-day oftener than ever, and rendered in the best manner.

*Often*, certainly—altogether too often; there is really too much music nowadays.

Are you, then, opposed to the popularization of music?

This question has two sides, each of which has its justification; but, often as I have thought it over, I cannot decide which is the better. It is certainly desirable that the masses should learn to know the master-works of the art of music; hear

them, and come to hear them bringing with them some understanding for them ; for this it is necessary to found garden and popular concerts, etc., to found music schools, choral societies, philharmonic societies, symphony concerts, etc. But, on the other hand, music demands, I feel, a consecration, a *cultus* in a temple to which only the initiated are admitted; she demands to be the chosen of the elect, in other words, to possess somewhat of the mysterious. Which of these two views is the right one? I would not like, for example, to hear the Ninth Symphony, or the last string-quartettes, or the last pianoforte sonatas of Beethoven in a garden or Volks concert: and not at all for fear that they would not be understood, but for fear they might perhaps be understood.

You take really too much delight in paradoxes.

I am also not clear whether the art museums are or have been educational for the people (in a real sense) for the plastic art, or whether they are not, and always were, merely educational institutes for the educated part of the community.

I believe that the art of music is subject to other educational laws for the people than those of plastic art, and hence cannot be compared to them.

Well, we will leave this question then altogether unsolved. I am, however, in all seriousness, of the opinion that—on account of hear-

ing and making too much music—it is very difficult for a composer of to-day to concentrate his mind (one of the principal necessities in creating), for he is obliged to hear and play so much of the music of others, *not his own;* is obliged still, after an exciting winter season and the ever-increasing throng of spring-tide music festivals (of the public I will say nothing, and can only wonder at its enormous love for music), to rush away tired, mayhap even ill, to a health resort, to listen three times a day to a concert, and if these programmes were only made up of dances, folk-songs, military music, and the like.—But no! it is again the *Tannhäuser* overture, the *Feuer-Zauber*, Mozart, Weber, and so on.

But the public is not composed of musicians only, who should not or do not wish to hear music!

For this reason one seldom returns from a health resort really benefited. But we will again resume our conversation seriously. You spoke just now of the best interpretations of the master-works nowadays. I have my doubts about that; the interpreter of to-day (conductor and virtuoso) delights especially in a capricious interpretation of the classical works (for which Wagner and Liszt are most to blame)—change of tempo, pauses, ritardandos, stringendos, crescendos, &c., not written by the composer. Pianoforte-editions, with effect-

expression (?), (Henselt, Tausig); revisions, adding orchestra to pianoforte compositions, melting two compositions into one (Liszt); re-instrumentation of Chopin's pianoforte concertos (diverse). Yes, even, *horribile dictu*, adding instruments to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Wagner!); ignoring the signs of repetition, and much besides. In the last particular it is really astounding that professional musicians can give themselves to such an unmusical proceeding! In Haydn, Mozart, and especially Beethoven, the signs of repetition are in no case *caprice*; on the contrary, an integral part of the structure of the composition. Perhaps in the adagio of Mozart's "Jupiter" symphony, and in the repetition of the scherzo after the trio in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony only, are the signs of repetition of a questionable nature (in Schubert, with the exception of the scherzos, they also mostly bear the customary character); but, for example, in the trio in D major, in the last movement of the F minor sonata, Op. 57 F; in the second movement of the B flat major trio, and above all in the string-quartets and symphonies of Beethoven, their omission is absolutely a *crimen læsæ majestatis!* Cutting (customary so often, in the works of Schubert especially) belongs to the same category of crime. How shall we describe the way in which the latter is done in operas, the directors saying

always that it is done for the good of the composition and the composer? That seems to me like the theory of the Inquisition, which compelled a man to be burned alive *in order to save his soul.*

It is not, however, to be denied that many an opera would gain by cutting?

Without doubt; but this must be done by the composer himself, or not without his acquiescence.

There are still several questions in regard to the art of music upon which I should like to have your opinion; will you give it me?

Willingly—of course, without prescribing—but according to the best of my knowledge and feeling.

I hear so much said about the *subjective* and *objective* in interpretation; which is the better?

I am wholly at a loss to understand what is meant by the *objective* in interpretation in any case. Every interpretation, if it is made by a person and not by a machine, is *eo ipso, subjective.* To do justice to the *object* (the composition) is the law and duty of every interpreter; but of course each one in his own way, *i.e.*, subjectively. And how is any other way imaginable? There are no two persons of the same character, the same nervous system, the same physical condition; even the difference of touch of the piano players, of the tone of violin and 'cello players, quality of voice in singers, of the nature of conductors, effect the subjective in

interpretation. Should the conception of a composition have to be objective, there could be only *one* right one, and all executants would be obliged to accommodate themselves to it. What would an executive artist be in that case?—a monkey? Of course, if a subjective interpretation makes an allegro of an adagio, or a funeral march of a scherzo, it becomes nonsense; but to render an adagio in a given tempo, according to one's own feeling, cannot be called doing injustice to the object. Should it be different in the interpretation of music than it is in the art of acting? Is there only *one* correct way to play Hamlet or King Lear? and must each actor only ape *one* Hamlet, or *one* King Lear, in order to do justice to the object? *Ergo*, I can only allow the validity of subjective interpretation in music.

What is your opinion of our young Russian school?

It is, in instrumental music, the fruit of the influence of Berlioz and Liszt, with the additional influence of the pianoforte compositions of Schumann and Chopin; and in general the endeavour in the direction of studied national style. Its creation is also based on a perfect control of technique and on masterly colouring; but, also, on an entire absence of outline, and the previously reigning want of form. Taking Glinka, who has written a few orchestral works on folk-songs and

folk-dances ("Kamarinskaja," "Jota Aragonesa," "Nuit à Madrid"), as model, they write too, mostly on folk-songs and folk-dances, giving evidence thereby of their own lack of invention—and cloak it however with the name *National Art, New School*, etc. Whether we are to await anything in the future in this direction I do not know. I do not wish to despair entirely, for I believe that the peculiarity in melody, rhythm, and in the musical character of the Russian folk gives promise of a new harvest for music in general (I consider the Oriental music also capable of as much); there are, too, a few representatives of this new school not without high musical endowment.

In all that we have said heretofore you have only mentioned the names of women in speaking of the art of singing; was that forgetfulness or intention?

The increase in the number of women interested in the art of music, in instrumental execution as well as in composition (I exclude the art of singing, the field in which she has always accomplished so much of excellence) dates from the second half of our century. I consider this growing excess also as one of the signs of the decline of our art. Women are wanting in two principal requisites for executive as well as creative art—subjectivity and initiative. They cannot raise themselves as executants above the objectivity (imitation), for

subjectivity they are wanting in courage and conviction. For musical creation they lack depth, concentration, power of thought, breadth of feeling, freedom of stroke, etc. It is enigmatical to me that music—the noblest, most beautiful, most refined, soulful, and heart-felt of all the creations of the mind of man—is so unattainable by woman, who is a combination of all these qualities! * In all the other arts, even in the sciences, she has accomplished much! The two feelings most natural to her, love for her husband and tenderness to her child, have never been portrayed by her in music. I know no love-duet composed by a woman, and no cradle-song. I do not say that there are none in existence, but that none composed by a woman has had sufficient artistic value to become a standard of the style.

That is not flattering for our sex. If it be the case, however, we must comfort ourselves with the hope that, as women have devoted themselves in such quantity to music of late, they may in time attain and give evidence of corresponding quality. Perhaps the next Beethoven and the next Liszt may be women!

I shall not live to see it, hence I shall not try to rob you of the hope.

* And the same of architecture—another proof of the relationship existing between the two arts.

I should like to know your views in regard to music-schools and conservatoires, the advantage of which is doubted by so many, indeed, their very existence entirely discountenanced by others.

There you touch a tender point with me. I myself have been founder of such institutions. It is not to be denied that our great Masters are not the offspring of schools of music, but that does not prove that music-schools are unnecessary, and that they have not been of great value to the art. The principal object of the school was always, and must always be, to increase the average of well-schooled musicians. The immense spread of the art of music makes the music-school a demand also—yes, a necessity. When we think what a *host* (choruses, orchestras, soli, directors, music-teachers, &c.) the art of music requires nowadays, we must acknowledge that private instruction could not possibly meet the requirements. Besides, the music-school has advantages in itself that are not to be undervalued. The musical atmosphere of the school alone is of great advantage to a disciple of music; added to this, the stimulation which belongs to all class-instruction, and always acts as incentive, &c. That music-schools do not always fulfil their task is no doubt true; in my opinion, for two reasons: firstly, for lack of sufficient money, when the school is not a Government institution;

and secondly, because the programme of instruction is made up too exclusively of the technical—*i.e.*, not enough of the ideal and at the same time practical education of the pupil. If the school be a Government institution, the first point is probably solved; but then come into consideration the system of patronage, philanthropic standpoint, mostly false ideas of art, disregard of its serious importance and its ideal requirements, so that the institution may very easily turn into a music-factory or a music-barrack, or even into a music-hospital. If the music-school be a private undertaking, the money question is apt to play such a weighty *rôle* that one can scarcely speak of the interests or demands of art. The second point demands very earnest consideration, especially in reference to final examination. A pupil of the music-school generally is drilled so technically by his teacher during the whole time spent there that he almost always makes a *good* final examination, and so receives the diploma accordingly. He is, however, rarely ripe for independent work, and therefore receives the slight of the public, and with him the institution where he received his musical education. This could be remedied, in my opinion, in the following manner: Give the pupil, perhaps two months before his examination, a number of pieces of different composers, of different character, of different epochs of art (concerto, chamber-music, and solo) for the

pianoforte, for example, from Scarlatti to, and including, Liszt, which he must be required to study *alone, i.e., without the assistance of his teacher* (of course, one must be able to depend entirely upon the honour of both teacher and pupil!); in the same way, for singing, for string or wind instruments, for each and every branch of the profession. If the pupil absolve such an examination with honour, he, his teacher, and the institution may rest assured that the ripeness of the pupil is proven, the pedagogic qualities of the teacher exhibited, and the value of the school no more a question. Each has fulfilled his task. I once met a pupil of a well-known conservatoire shortly after his examination, who played me his examination piece (the first solo (!) from Hummel's B minor Concerto), and that very well, but who could play me neither its first *tutti* nor one measure beyond the solo he had learned!

I, too, have had a remarkable experience in that respect.

When I hear piano-playing, I often think how happy the earlier composers would have been to have known the instrument of to-day.

I believe that the instruments of all times must have had tone-colouring and effects that we cannot produce on the pianoforte of to-day; that the compositions were always intended for the character of the instrument in use, and only upon such

could be heard fully as intended—and so played upon the pianoforte of to-day would perhaps be heard to disadvantage. If Ph. Em. Bach could write a book on the expression in pianoforte-playing, it must have been possible to interpret with expression on the piano of that day; but we cannot imagine it possible on the instrument now known to us as clavecin, clavichord, clavicembalo, spinet, &c., and he speaks no doubt of an instrument known to his father also. We can, at any rate, know nothing decidedly of the instruments of that day; even those to be found in the museums of London, Paris, Brussels, &c., give us no idea, since time would destroy the tone of a piano entirely beyond recognition, and, besides, to us the most important point, the *manner of playing these instruments*, is wholly unknown. It is strange how little the professional makers (instrument-makers) know of these things! In London I attended a lecture on this subject where a professional declared that J. S. Bach wrote his pianoforte compositions, among them the Chromatic Fantasia, for the spinet. But is this imaginable? Even the recitative in it would brand this statement as false. But, in addition, such compositions as the Prelude in F major in Part II. of his "Wohltemperirte Clavier," or the Sarabandas in G minor or D minor from the English suites! Is the four to eight bars' prolongation of a tone written for the eye alone? There must have been

attachments to the spinet of that day (now unknown) which made it possible to sustain a tone as on the harmonium of to-day. Neither do I believe, as is often said to-day, that Mozart wrote for the spinet. The orchestration of his pianoforte concertos makes that improbable; also the five-octave compass of his pianoforte compositions. It is possible that he had a spinet in his work-room, but publicly he must have played upon a beautiful-toned grand. The pinched, short, small tone of the spinet known to us would not allow the brilliancy of the *passage* or the wonderful charm of melody of his compositions. It must have been, then, that the instrument a hundred years ago had an entirely different tone from the one we hear from it to-day.

In your opinion, then, the pianoforte of to-day is no advance?

No advance in the sense of works *before* the time of Beethoven. I would like to recommend a different use (touch and pedal) of the pianoforte of our day in playing the compositions of different epochs. So, for example, I would play a piece of Haydn or Mozart on the instrument of our day, especially in *forte*, with the left pedal; because their *forte* has not the character of the Beethoven *forte*—especially not of the still later composers. Playing Händel, and especially Bach, I would try by means of variety of touch and change of pedal to

*register*—that is, give them throughout an organ-like character; Hummel I would try to play with scholastic, short, clear touch, and very little pedal; Weber and Mendelssohn with very brilliant execution and pedal; Weber, in his sonatas and Concertstück, with operatic and dramatic, Mendelssohn, in his "Songs without Words," with lyric character. Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and, of course, the later composers, require all the resources imaginable in our instrument of to-day.

I must confess that to me, too, the compositions of Haydn and Mozart sound too loud and full played upon the pianoforte of the day.

I go so far that I do not like to hear their string quartets played with a large tone and broad bowing; neither do I like to hear their symphonies from an orchestra of great number—in short, my desire in the interpretation would be variety in the tone-colouring for the different epochs of art.

You speak of organ registration for the pianoforte, how do you mean that?

Of course, merely in the sense of suggestion; by means of change of pedal and powerful and light touch. I imagine, in doing so, the places which demand the pedal, played with the right pedal of the pianoforte, and that, not in the sense of the theoretical requirements of the harmony,

but in the sense of the weight of the organ pedal—so, often without lifting the piano pedal in spite of change of harmony.

Still, that could only be applicable to organ compositions arranged for the piano, since no organ-character is required in the compositions written by Bach for piano.

It seems to me as though Bach thought of the organ in everything he wrote, with the exception of his dances and, perhaps, the preludes (and even among these there are many which have an organ-like character); but, as a matter of course, what he has written for the pianoforte must be played upon the pianoforte—it is only that I cannot dismiss the idea that his piano must have had attachments that made it possible to vary the quality of tone, hence this desire for "registering" always when I play these compositions. I confess that this is a musical paradox of mine and—*peccavi.*

Is it really so entirely impossible to find out anything reliable in regard to the manner of interpretation of the older compositions?

Unfortunately, the composers before Haydn have left us entirely in the dark as to their intentions in the rendering of their compositions; neither tempo nor shading has been indicated by them (Ph. Em. Bach has even written only the upper voice and the bass in his pianoforte compositions); they have left it then altogether to our

understanding and caprice, and by so doing have created a truly chaotic state of affairs.

This has, however, been ameliorated in later times by classical editions, edited by distinguished musicians?

On this subject I expressed my opinion several years ago in a letter to the music publisher Bartholf Senff. The evil has rather increased than diminished. One can scarcely obtain a composition of these masters, until, and including, Chopin, which is not published after the manner of some famed musicians. If the publishers would, after the publication of the large editions of Bach, Händel, Mozart, Beethoven, etc., only publish the pieces *singly*, the public would be correspondingly thankful! Now, if one wishes to know how a fugue of the "Wohltemperirte Clavier" looks in the original edition, he must find it in the library, Vol. X. of the Bach edition. The public has no benefit from this, and must content itself with the edition of a famous musician; of what a problematic nature these editions are we have sufficient proof in Czerny's edition of the "Wohltemperirte Clavier."

But exactly his edition has been regarded as a model for many years?

This is, in my opinion, unfortunate. I have never been able to reconcile myself to the

indications of tempo or of expression in the preludes or in the fugues. A very few examples will be sufficient. To give the fugue in C minor, Part I., a delicate staccato character, when immediately after (the fugue is one of the shorter ones) a close enters whose import would require a 32-foot organ stop, is, to say the least, of very questionable nature. To give the theme of the succeeding fugue in C sharp major a lively character by making the quavers staccato, is again questionable—the whole fugue is of lyric import and legato character. The notation—two notes legato and two staccato in the theme of the fugue in G minor, Part I.—is really too much against reason, since by this means it gains a scherzo character, while it plainly (as the minor key indicates) is of a melancholy, complaining, singing character; to give the prelude in F minor, Part II., a slow tempo is, too, very singular, for from the fifth bar onwards a figure is used which in a slow tempo would be very tiresome. Is the latter even imaginable in Bach? And so many other things. In this I do not mean to call into question or depreciate the pedagogic importance of Czerny in any way. reckon him myself as one of the very best in this respect; this edition, however, seems to me absolutely false. It is true that our beautiful, godly art has this misfortune, that it cannot make two musicians the same in feeling. How differently

musicians feel is proved sufficiently in the prelude in C major, Part I., of the same "Wohltemperirte Clavier." To me, it is the real modulatory pianoforte-prelude—a chain of broken chords (arpeggio) to be played in quick tempo with brilliant touch; to many others a dreamy piece—to be executed with soft shading. Since Gounod used it as foundation for his "Ave Maria" many are of the opinion that without the melody it has also a religious character, etc.

Then it is indeed sad for the classical composers?

Oh, very, very sad: unless an academic edition of their works be published soon, in which tempo, marks of expression, character of the composition, manner of embellishment, etc., are academically decided.

To the best of my knowledge, Ph. Em. Bach has written a treatise on the embellishments?

Yes, he has; but firstly, he had the manner of rendering the embellishments for the instruments of that day in view. Whether this would be applicable nowadays to our instruments of the same character is very questionable. Secondly, the composers of that day did not write their embellishments in one and the same manner, and Ph. Em. Bach wrote his treatise merely for the embellishments in his father's works. Thirdly, there are not to-day two musicians of the same

opinion in regard to the rendering of embellishments.

In such a condition of affairs an academic edition of composers, at least until and including Beethoven, is a great need.

If musicians could only agree on any one question in music!

I have heard that you do not agree with the programmes of the symphony concerts.

I confess that the *tutti-frutti* character usual in the arrangement of such programmes is disagreeable to me. A symphony of Haydn, immediately followed by the *Tannhäuser* overture of Wagner, or the reverse, is offensive to me, and that not on account of the preference for one composer or another, or one work and another, but on account of the glaring difference in tone-colouring. I would prefer a whole concert (overture, aria, concerto, songs, solo, symphony) from one and the same composer.

Is there any one, Beethoven perhaps excepted, who might dare put the patience of the public to such a test? I do not speak of operas in which subject and scenery might make amends for the occasional tedium of the music; not either of sacred or profane oratorios and cantatas, where the text helps the interest.

But we go to hear a lecture on a certain subject—whether we agree with the lecturer or

not, we listen to him; we visit, too, the studio of a painter or sculptor—the objects there may not please us altogether, but we look at them. So it should be in the case of a composer. If, however, the listening to the different works of *one* composer is not to be thought of, I would recommend at least the division into two epochs: the epoch from Palestrina to Schumann and Chopin inclusive, and the epoch from Berlioz to the composers of our day* inclusive, and in a series of subscription concerts give a concert of the first and one of the second epoch alternately.

You are also opposed, to the best of my knowledge, to the customary placing of the orchestra?

The placing of the orchestra is a question not solved so far: the symphony requires one placing, the oratorio another, the opera again another. It has always seemed to me that in the symphony concerts the placing of the first violins to the left and the second violins to the right of the conductor causes the listeners on the left to hear too little, and the listeners on the right too much, of the second voice. I have attempted (the orchestra always grumbling) placing the string quintet *in plenum* on both sides of the conductor, *i.e.*, the

* I consider the composers Raff, Gade, Brahms, Bruch, Goldmark, etc., as belonging to the first epoch; firstly, on account of the character of their creations; and secondly, on account of their musical training.

second violins next to the first ascending the estrade, and then violas, then 'celli, then contra-bassi on the left of the estrade; and in the same manner again—first, second violins, violas, etc., on the right side of the estrade. The wind instruments, from the flutes, oboes, to the trombones, in the middle of the estrade, from the conductor on ascending the estrade; above them, the timpani and other percussion instruments also. In the audience, I was told, the effect was much more satisfactory and beautiful, but it is hard to root out old prejudices, and so I abandoned this manner of placing the orchestra. In chorus, too, I think it best to place all four chorus voices on each side of the estrade; in double chorus it appeared to me a matter of course; but in this, too, I met with unwillingness and opposition. There is still another position that I cannot understand—that is, the position of the conductor in the opera. He should, if he do his task justice, be able to make himself felt on the stage, and, at the same time, in the orchestra; a glance or a wave of the hand is often sufficient to assist the singer, be it in tempo or in musical expression, if he should accidentally lose his way, and how is that possible if the conductor has his stand, not at the footlights of the stage (as formerly), but at the edge of the orchestra (as now)? There he can, at most, merely give the orchestra the necessary hints; the artists on the

stage are entirely forsaken by the conductor—*i.e.*, left entirely to themselves. To be sure, in view of the demands made on the singer of to-day (good memory, correct intonation, and clear declamation), where singing, phrasing, technique, and many other things are scarcely given a thought, the conductor is for the stage now hardly of importance or use.

What do you think of musical prodigies?

It is true that most of our heroes of music have been prodigies, but their number is still a very small one in comparison with the numerous talented children who almost daily appear, and of whom later nothing, or very little, is heard. These children exhibit generally astounding musical talent from a very early age, but there comes a time (with boys from the fifteenth until the twentieth year; girls from the fourteenth until the seventeenth year) when the musical gift weakens or slumbers altogether, and only those who are able to pass this Rubicon will then become real artists. Of such the number is very small.

There is still another question that interests me very much, and about which I am not clear—what is the church style in music?

("Das will ich Sie gleich sagen, meine Gutste; dass weiss ich Sie selber nicht.") "*That I will tell you at once, my good friend; I don't know it myself.*" After all, how do you mean that? Do you speak of prayer set to music, or of

compositions with sacred subject or with sacred text?

Well, both!

It is not possible, in my opinion, to have *one* church style for all the Christian world. The southerner feels in prayer different from the northerner, the Catholic other than the Protestant; these, again, different from the Orthodox, etc. To me, the singing of a chorale in unison by the congregation, supported by the organ as harmonic base, as it is done in the Protestant churches (of Germany), is most sympathetic in a musical sense. Part-singing has within itself more the character of an artistic performance; hence, ceases to be individual prayer. But I can also well understand that the Catholic requires, for the splendour of his service, organ, chorus, solo, orchestra, etc.* In the church compositions of our great masters, it would be difficult to discover a standard or prescribed church style, it seems to me. Take, for example, the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* of Palestrina, the *Messe* in B minor of Bach, and the *Missa Solemnis* of Beethoven. Which of the three is really in prescribed church style? Or, instead of the Mass of Palestrina (since it is *a cappella*, and the other two with orchestral accompaniment), take the *Requiem* of Mozart. Can we speak here of a strict, recognised,

* The Greek Orthodox service allows of no instrument, and is in music merely of a choral (*a cappella*) nature.

prescribed church style? All of these compositions are serious in character, with sacred texts, and of unusual beauty, and that is all; or ought the fugue and the polyphonic treatment of the voices alone to distinguish the church style in music? or should church style absolutely require the usual A—men, Halle — luja, Hosan — na, with several bars' figuration on the vowel? The reason why in Protestant countries the church music is usually more earnest than it is in Catholic countries is that in Latin countries the opera has influenced church music (that is really the unhealthy influence of the vocal-virtuoso on the composer again). This it could not do in Protestant countries, because there, even to-day, the pious Protestants abhor the theatre. To condemn for that reason the *Stabat Mater* of Rossini, or the *Messe* of Verdi in Protestant countries, I think an error. The Protestant may indeed say, *I have a different feeling*, but not, *That is bad, because it is other than my idea of worship.*

The operatic and homophonic in these compositions is to be condemned, at any rate, from a purely artistic standpoint, is it not?

Heaven is different in Palermo from heaven in Insterburg, and that explains very much. As an example: A beautiful maiden of Palermo throws herself upon her knees before an image of the Virgin Mary at the street corner, and prays—

"O Virgin Mary! help me to win Beppo for my husband; if thou dost I will offer thee my coral necklace; if thou dost not, then——" Such a prayer, under such a sky, at such a shrine, I cannot imagine otherwise set to music than as a melody in allegro tempo in $\frac{6}{8}$ measure; but when a beautiful maiden of Insterburg turns to God with her heart's desire, her humility, earnestness, and contrition demand, in musical expression, a melody in adagio, tempo in $\frac{4}{4}$, perhaps $\frac{3}{2}$ tempo.

Paradoxes again!

Possibly, but thus it is.

We were speaking, though, of a given Latin text; of a Mass composed by musicians of different religions.

And must not fail to consider, therefore, the difference in their religions; each according to the clime, the training, the character, the historical and cultural epoch, the tradition, etc. It is with that as with the art of painting. A picture by Holbein or by Albrecht Dürer has another character than the same subject painted by Leonardo da Vinci or Raphael, or by any Italian, and also another character than the same painted by Rubens, Rembrandt, etc.

You spoke in the beginning of the echo and re-echo of historical events, state of culture, the age, etc., in music; what connection have they with the terrible events of our century?

You seem to wish to carry the question to the extreme; it would soon become ludicrous in that case; and still I hold firmly to my saying. Yes, music is to me the echo or re-echo of all these; and though you may call them paradoxes again, I can follow musically even the events of our century. Our century begins either with 1789, the French Revolution (musically with Beethoven), or the year 1815 is to be looked upon as the close of the eighteenth century—disappearance of Napoleon from the political horizon, the Restoration, etc. (musically the scholastic-virtuoso period: Hummel, Moscheles, and others); flourish of modern philosophy (third period of Beethoven); the July revolution of 1830, fall of the Legitimists, raising the son of Philippe Égalité to the throne, the Orleans dynasty, democratic and constitutional principle in the foreground, monarchical principle in the background, 1848 in sight (Berlioz); the Æolian harp of the Polish rebellion of 1831 (Chopin); romanticism generally and its victory over pseudo-classicism (Schumann); flourish of all the arts and sciences (Mendelssohn); the triumph of the bourgeoisie, in the sense of material existence, a shield against all disturbing elements of politics, and culture (Capellmeister music); Louis Napoleon becomes Emperor (Liszt, the virtuoso, becomes the composer of symphonies and oratorios); his reign (the operetta a branch

of art); the German-Franco war, Germany's unity, the freedom of Europe resting on ten millions of soldiers, change in all formerly accepted political principles (Wagner, his music-drama, his art principles); the present condition of Europe, the awaiting and seeking to prevent a frightful collision, uncertainty, general feeling of instability in the politics of the day (condition of music foreboding possibility of downfall in the art of music, transition period, longing for a genius); division and conflict of the ever-increasing political, religious, and social parties (representatives and defenders of all schools of music: classic, romantic, modern, Nihilist); striving of divers nationalities and races for autonomy, or federation, or political independence (more and more striving for reflective nationalism in music), etc.

In such paradoxical flight I cannot possibly follow you.

But you must acknowledge that in all this a certain affinity is not to be denied.

I conclude, from all that I have heard from you, that you cannot be happy in your profession now, and I deplore it most sincerely. What you revere *has been;* what *is*, you do not revere. And thus you find yourself in entire opposition to the reigning taste, art criticism, and cultivation of music—to practice and creation, to the musical education of the young, the modern views of art, the

modern art principles—in short, to everything connected with music; therefore it is easy to understand that you with your criticisms, as your much-lauded virtuoso with his technique, "break all bounds."

I feel that I shall not live long enough now to enjoy the coming Bach or Beethoven, and that is sorrowful to me. My only solace is that I may still have the same enthusiasm for an organ prelude or fugue of the Bach that *was;* for a sonata, a string-quartet, or a symphony of a Beethoven that *was;* for a song, or impromptu, or Moment Musical of a Schubert that *was;* for a prelude or nocturno, or polonaise, or mazurka of a Chopin that *was;* for a national opera from the Glinka that *was*, to-day as ever.

I recognise the creations of to-day as an advancement in the art, and if it is, as you say, only a period of transition, it interests me greatly more than that which *was*. I hope most assuredly to enjoy the future Bach or Beethoven, and to delight thoroughly in his *new* art.

Oh, happy being!

After having accompanied Madame von —— to her carriage, I returned to my studio, and remained standing there, meditating whether it may not be the *musical Götterdämmerung* that is now breaking upon us.